THE LAW OF GOD
BEFORE AND AFTER CHRIST

by Walter L. Porter, Ph.D.

Searcy, Arkansas

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About the author

Walter L. Porter is a retired professor of psychology. His last position was at Harding University, a Christian institution, where he taught for twenty-five years. After four years of active service as a U.S. Naval Aviator he obtained both Bachelor and Master of Arts degrees at Pepperdine College. He was later awarded the Ph.D. degree from George Peabody College, which is now part of Vanderbilt University. You can read more of his works at www.stillvoices.org.

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INTRODUCTION

LAW, JUSTICE, AND RIGHTEOUSNESS

Law is defined as rules given and enforced by authority. The law of God consists of his laws of nature for the world, and his moral laws for mankind. Moral laws are needed for us because we have knowledge of good and evil, and the free will to choose. And the consequences of those laws are as inexorable as are the laws of nature. Choosing good and rejecting evil means living righteously. And God's moral laws were given to promote righteousness. The Bible is filled with testimony of God's love of righteousness. Here is one from the Psalms: "**For the word of Jehovah is right, and all his work is *done* in faithfulness. He loves righteousness and justice"** (Psalm 33:4-5). He loves righteousness because that is what makes all good things happen.

Because God gave us the power to choose, we are going to be judged by the choices we make. The final judgment will be at the end of the world, which Jesus spoke about: **"The Son of man will send forth his agents, and they will gather out of his kingdom all the stumbling-blocks, and those doing lawlessness, and will cast them into the furnace of fire. There will be the weeping and the gnashing of teeth. Then the righteous will shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears to hear, let him hear"** (Matthew 13:41-43)**.** Life in heaven will be good because it will be a world of righteousness, as Peter said: **"But we anticipate a new heavens and a new earth according to his promise, in which righteousness dwells"** (Second Peter 3:13)**.**

In this dark world there are many things falsely promoted as righteous, some of which are very unrighteous. God in his Holy Bible has revealed to us what is true righteousness. One good summary of things that are righteous and unrighteous is in the book of Galatians. There Paul contrasts the evil works of the flesh—our animal lusts and impulses—with the fruit of the Spirit of God which guides the hearts of the righteous. Paul said, **"Now the works of the flesh are apparent, which are, adultery, fornication, uncleanness, licentiousness, idolatry, sorcery, hatreds, strifes, jealousies, wraths, selfish ambitions, dissensions, factions, envyings, murders, intoxications, revelings, and things like these, of which I forewarn you, as I also did forewarn, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness, self-control. Against such things there is no law"** (Galatians 5:19-23).

Another good summary is the ten commandments of the law of Moses (see Exodus 20). However, the best summary of righteousness is what we call the sermon on the mount given by Jesus to his disciples (see Matthew 5-7). In that lengthy sermon he gave many lessons and commands about righteousness.

Now regarding justice. Righteousness is the application of God's will, and justice is the application of his laws. Therefore, justice is a part of righteousness. The application of the laws of men creates justice only when those laws are in harmony with the law of God. There

is great confusion these days about the meaning of justice because there are so many bad laws and bad decisions by judges. And those things defeat justice. True justice can only be understood by knowing God's laws and how to properly apply them. And that is best learned from knowledge of the word of God, the Holy Bible. Teaching about the moral law of God is the major purpose of this book.

Words For and About Law

The most common words in the Bible that are used to refer to God's law are these: law, commandment, statute, and ordinance. Those words are used hundreds of times in the Bible, the most frequent of which are law and commandment. I did a search on the internet looking for information about the differences between those words. Here is the location of the website I found that was most relevant to what I was searching: http://www.biblepages.web.surftown.se/ec03b.htm. Below is a quotation from that site which seems to summarize best what the author concluded about the differences:

> It is important to understand that many of the different Hebrew words which are behind the English translations "law", "testimonies", "commandments", "statutes", "decrees", "ordinances", "charges" and "judgements", were often used interchangeably, almost as synonyms. ... The KJ version, as well as others, have translated the Hebrew words in many different ways in different passages, without consistency. Thus, the seeming division of the things of the old covenant into such "categories" as "law", "testimonies", "commandments", "statutes", "decrees", "ordinances", "charges" and "judgments", is not a real one. Most bible versions use such words interchangeably, and are not consistent in their manner of translating the Hebrew words. Further: It appears that even in the Hebrew language, some of the words in question were at times used alternatively, interchangeably.

Therefore, do not become confused by attempting to find a clear difference in the meaning of those words. It is enough to understand they all refer to the general meaning of law.

Not only are many different words used to refer to law, but the word law is used in many different ways. Its use ranges from a narrow reference to individual commands, to a broad reference to all the teachings of justice and righteousness. That is especially true for how it is used in the New Testament. For example, in his writings Paul mentions the law of Moses, the law of commandments, the law of faith, the law of works, the law of God, the law of Christ, the law of the Spirit of life in Christ, the law of righteousness, and the law of sin; all of that in addition to simply using the word law. He also mentioned a law of sin, a law in his body-parts that warred against the law of his mind. And James mentioned the law of liberty that disciples of Christ are to live by.

Jesus and other men of the New Testament also used the word law to refer to all of the writings of the Old Testament, and not just the law of Moses. For example, Jesus said, **"But, that the word that is written in their law may be fulfilled, They hated me without cause"** (John 15:25). That was a passage from Psalm 69, not the law of Moses. Therefore, be careful to understand how the word law is used in any passage of scripture.

Uses of Words in the Bible

The Bible was originally written in Hebrew and Greek, and you need also to be aware that many words of Hebrew and Greek that were used in the Bible do not have the precise meaning they have in their English equivalents. For example, the word forever in English means everlasting and without end. However, in Hebrew and Greek their words for forever do not always have that kind of absolute meaning. They often mean simply a long time, or a lifetime, or as long as something exists, as in this passage about a bondman Paul sent back to his owner: **"For perhaps because of this he departed for an hour, so that thou might receive him back forever ..."** (Philemon 1:15).

Other examples of words in English Bible translations that vary somewhat from their common meaning are the words cattle and brass. In the Bible the word for cattle includes all domesticated animals, not just bulls and cows. It is equivalent to the word livestock, which is the more popular word today. And the word brass means any copper alloy, including bronze. Actually, the word bronze was coined in the eighteenth century to make a distinction between the kinds of copper alloy. And I suspect the reason they chose the word bronze for the common alloy used during Bible times was to discredit the word of God. For they could just as easily have called it brass, which is the word the early English translations used. The devil is **"the spirit that now works in the sons of disobedience"** (Ephesians 2:2), and he uses them to create many subtle devices to undermine our faith in the Bible.

Other examples are the words Greek and world. In the Bible the word Greek is used only in the New Testament, and it usually means Gentile of whatever nationality. And the word world often meant the world they knew about, and not the entire globe. For example, when Paul told his Roman brothers, **"First, I indeed express thanks to my God through Jesus Christ for all of you, that your faith is proclaimed in the whole world"** (Romans 1:8), that meant their known world. However, when John said, **"... the world passes away, and the lust of it, but he who does the will of God abides into the age"** (First John 2:15-17), that meant the entire physical realm.

Therefore, a major problem with translation (Bible and otherwise) is that there are not always exact English equivalents. Consequently, translators of the Bible must use words that may not have the exact same meaning as those of the Hebrew and Greek. There are many other words in the Bible whose precise meaning can only be learned by studying the ways the word is used in various passages. Dictionaries and even lexicons alone are not sufficient to learn their meaning. It is very important to recognize that fact.

Moreover, you need to remember that in our modern world word definitions are constantly changing. Which is another reason you need to be careful when you read the Bible, and make an effort to understand how a word is being used. Let not scoffers who seize upon such difficulties threaten your faith and discourage you from studying and learning from God's holy word.

Remember also many words in the Bible are used figuratively. For example, the word know sometimes refers to sexual intimacy, as in this passage about Joseph: **"And he took his**

wife, and knew her not until she brought forth her son, the firstborn. And he called his name JESUS" (Matthew 1:24-25). The use of the word that way is commonly known as carnal knowledge. Less commonly understood is the expression "uncover nakedness," which also refers to sexual intimacy, as the following passage indicates: **"And thou shall not take a wife in addition to her sister, to be a rival *to her*, to uncover her nakedness, besides the other in her life-time"** (Leviticus 18:18).

Another less understood expression is "cut off from the people," which almost certainly means put to death, although not everyone agrees. Some say it means being exiled. However, the following example shows that it means being put to death: **"Ye shall keep the sabbath therefore, for it is holy to you. Everyone who profanes it shall surely be put to death, for whoever does any work on it, that soul shall be cut off from among his people"** (Exodus 31:14).

Another word that requires careful interpretation is the word evil. That word can refer to whatever is wrong or to whatever is harmful. Therefore, evil is not always wrong. America did much evil to the Nazis, but that evil was not wrong. Here is a passage in the Bible that uses the word both ways: **"Thus says Jehovah: Behold, I frame evil against you, and devise a device against you. Return ye now everyone from his evil way, and amend your ways and your doings"** (Jeremiah 18:11). The evil that Jehovah would frame against them was harm; the evil that he wanted them to return from was sin. Every dictionary includes those two meanings, but scoffers love to misapply them so they can accuse God falsely of doing that which is wrong. Be not misled by them.

The Masculinity of the Bible

Also in order to understand the Bible you must recognize its masculine character. To help you do that I compared a few simple statistics in the New Testament from seven different Bible versions: The King James Version (KJV), the Revised Standard version (RSV), the New International Version (NIV), the New King James Version (NKJV), the New Revised Standard Version (NRSV), the New English Translation (NET), and my own A Conservative Version (ACV). Depending upon the version, there are about 4200 to 6000 uses of the following gender specific pronouns: he, him, she, and her. In all seven versions the masculine words outrank the feminine ones more than 9 to 1.

In the KJV, the RSV, the NIV, and the NKJV there are from about 1100 to over 1400 uses of the words, man, men, woman, and women, depending upon the version. Their respective male/female percentage ratios are 90/10, 87/13, 85/15, and 86/14. In the pro-feminist NRSV and NET there are 667 and 868 of those words, respectively, with their percentage ratios being 75/25 and 80/20. The ACV has almost 2100 of those words with a percentage ratio of 91/9. For all seven of the versions there are about 500 uses of the words, son, sons, daughter, daughters. In all of them 93 to 94 percent are son or sons.

There are roughly between 350 and 450 uses of the gender specific nouns brother and sister (singular and plural), including the archaic word brethren (which means brothers). In the ACV, the KJV, the RSV, the NIV, and the NKJV the masculine words comprise 93 to 94

percent of the total. For both of the pro-feminist versions (NRSV and NET) the percentages are 70/30. The large difference in their percentages compared with the other five versions was caused primarily by their translators inserting the phrase "brothers and sisters," where the original Greek text has only brothers.

The figures for gender specific words with the smallest differences are those for parents. There are commonly about 500 uses of the words, father, fathers, mother, mothers. In all seven versions 81 to 84 percent of those words are father or fathers. Although the gender difference with these words is less than any of the other comparisons I made, nevertheless, the use of the paternal words still outranks the use of maternal ones by five to one.

There are situations recorded in the Bible when statistical comparisons cannot be made because women simply were not counted. For example, we read of two occasions in the New Testament when Jesus fed thousands of men from only a handful of food; one group consisted of five thousand, and another of four thousand: **"And those who ate were about five thousand men, besides women and children"** (Mat 14:21); **"And those who ate were four thousand men, besides women and children"** (Mat 15:38). Notice that only the men were counted; the women and children were excluded from the count.

That is typical of the Holy Spirit who guided the hearts of the righteous men whose lives are recorded in the Bible, and of the prophets who wrote the words in it. Indeed, the statistics in favor of the masculine could be much greater. For often Greek adjectives in the New Testament are given without an associated noun. And as William D. Mounce wrote in his book, *Basics of Biblical Greek*, "In this case you must use your common sense to translate properly." When a New Testament writer left out the associated noun of an adjective, it seems clear that he knew the context of the word would make obvious what the noun should be. Consider, for example, the English word saint which is translated from a Greek adjective meaning holy or sanctified. If he was writing about women, and the word holy is feminine, then it is clear he meant holy or sanctified women. But in most cases the English word saint is more correctly translated holy or sanctified men because it is almost always masculine plural. Nevertheless, every other English translation I know about uses words to conceal the masculine character of the Bible.

I translated the Conservative Version to try to preserve as much of that original masculine character as possible. I used historic English, which made that easier. Hence, words such as man and men can refer to males only or to both genders; the context reveals which is the case. For example, Jesus answered one temptation of the devil with these words: **"It is written, Man will not live on bread alone, but on every word coming out through the mouth of God"** (Matthew 4:4). He was clearly referring to mankind. In contrast, the words woman and women refer only to females. And the Bible nowhere contains such expressions as "he or she," "him or her." God has never recognized the equality of women with men. The fact that words such as men and sons can refer to both genders should be remembered as you read the Bible. Otherwise, you will be misled or confused. Such a warning was completely unnecessary before the rise of the women's rebellion called feminism. That satanic

movement has contributed greatly to the perversion of the English language, as well as spawning a host of other evils.

Law in the Old Testament

In Part One of this book I give what the Old Testament says about law. There is very little in Genesis, the first book of the Bible, that is specifically about law. In fact the word itself appears only once in the entire book. However, the book of Genesis does describe how God interacted with mankind, and with certain groups and individuals based upon what may be called the universal laws of righteousness, or the common law of God. That law consists of those ways of righteousness he expects for all mankind, such as not committing murder or theft. I also say a few things about the obedience of the men he chose to begin a special people for himself; namely, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (later called Israel).

The many laws of Moses were given after his people, the sons of Israel, had multiplied greatly. Those laws were given while the people were in the wilderness on their way to their promised land. And they are recorded in the books of Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy. I quote the laws from those books, and I present them in the exact order they appear. The only organization I give to them is to add descriptive headings to each of them. Many of the laws about certain topics are grouped together, such as those about offerings, the tabernacle, and sins of sex. Therefore, I gave them a general heading, with subheadings for each specific law within the group.

However, there were a few occasions when an entirely different kind of law was inserted within a group. For example, in the middle of the lengthy list of commands describing how to construct the tabernacle, a law about taking a census was inserted. In cases like that I enclosed the subheading of that law in parentheses to show it was not related to the main heading, but was like an aside.

There are many statutes and ordinances in the law of Moses. The number of which has been estimated, the most common being 613. Nevertheless, I have little faith is such attempts. An article in the internet encyclopedia Wikipedia admits there are many difficulties attempting to make such a count (see http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/613_mitzvot).

In that article the author said, “Rabbis who attempted to compile a list of the 613 commandments faced a number of difficulties, being:

- Which statements were to be counted as commandments? Every command by God to any individual? Only commandments to the entire people of Israel?
- Would an order from God be counted as a commandment, for the purposes of such a list, if it could only be complied with in one place and time? Or, would such an order only count as a commandment if it could - at least in theory - be followed at all times? (The latter is the view of Maimonides.)
- How does one count commandments in a single verse which offers multiple prohibitions? Should each prohibition count as a single commandment, or does the entire set count as one commandment?

"In *Torah Min Hashamayim* ('Heavenly Torah'), Conservative Judaism's Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel writes:

> Judah ibn Bal'am denigrates those who number the mitzvot [from a Hebrew word meaning commandments], and who attempt 'to force their count to equal 613.' In his opinion, this is impossible, for if we were to count all of the mitzvot, including those that were temporary commandments and those that were intended to endure, the number would be far greater than 613. 'And if we confined ourselves only to those that endure, we would find fewer than this number.' (*Behinat Hamitzvot* Rabbi Yehiel Mikhel Gutmann, Breslau, 1928, p.26).

"Despite these misgivings, the idea that there are 613 commandments became accepted as normative in the Jewish community. Today, even among those who do not literally accept this count as accurate, it is still a common practice to refer to the total system of commandments within the Torah as the '613 commandments'."

I need to mention that the Jews include the book of Genesis with the other four books in what they call the Torah, meaning law. However, only one of their laws is contained in that book, and it was repeated in Leviticus. That was the command of circumcision for Abraham and all his offspring. Nevertheless, another one of those 613 comes from the book of Genesis, but it was never a commandment. It is based upon this passage: **"Therefore the sons of Israel do not eat the sinew of the hip which is upon the hollow of the thigh, to this day, because he touched the hollow of Jacob's thigh in the sinew of the hip"** (Genesis 32:32).

After the book of Deuteronomy virtually all other references to laws in the Old Testament are simply descriptions of whether or not the people were obeying them. Many of the references are statements from God and his prophets urging obedience. David did add some things to the worship at the temple, but they are not considered laws from God. Moses alone was the lawgiver sent by God for the old covenant. I also add some brief summaries of Old Testament history among the listing of the laws because the Bible text mixes history with the commands. And I occasionally insert some short comments about the laws.

The Law of Moses Analyzed

In Part Two of this book I organize those laws into topics. The topics selected are based upon my own judgment about one way to classify the many laws of Moses. I also offer comments and suggestions about the usefulness of those laws for modern times. The topics are listed in both tables of contents. I gave no specific organization to the listing, although I placed Jehovah first, followed by those that I thought were things most associated with him. I also added relevant comments at the end of some of the topics about how those things may relate to the new covenant of Christ.

Law in the New Testament

In Part Three of this book I quote those passages of the New Testament that either mention law or are relevant to law. In addition I make many comments and interpretations about

some of those passages. The New Testament contains a wealth of information about laws: about what their true purpose is, and about how God wants them applied.

Jesus obeyed the laws of Moses as long as he lived on this earth, and he commanded all Jews to obey them. However, he had many conflicts with the Jewish leaders about the law. For example, they interpreted some of the laws too strictly, but Jesus obeyed them as God intended. Consequently, they often accused Jesus of breaking the law, breaking it the way they wanted the law obeyed. One of the most common complaints they had against him was how he observed the sabbath day. For example, he often healed the infirm on the sabbath day, and the Jews condemned him because of it. However, he gave them examples of how they all cared for their animals on the sabbath, which always silenced them, but they condemned him anyway. When sinners hate someone they are not deterred by truth and reason.

Jesus opposed the excessive strictness of some of their practices, which went beyond what was taught in the law of Moses. However, he commanded more strictness about some things than were taught in the law. For example, he said, **"Ye have heard that it was said, Thou shall not commit adultery. But I say to you, that every man who looks on a woman to crave her has already committed adultery with her in his heart"** (Matthew 5:27-28). Hence, his conflicts with the leaders of the Jews were often about the law. Moreover, they had added many of their own traditions to the laws of Moses, and they accused him whenever he violated them. Those conflicts about the law and their traditions were a major cause of their hostility toward him.

After Jesus was taken from the earth, and his church was established, the law of Moses began to be phased out. That is clearly stated by the author of the book of Hebrews, who wrote much about law. For when he was contrasting the new covenant from Jesus Christ with the old covenant from Moses, he said, **"In saying, New, he has made the first old. And what is becoming old and obsolete is near disappearance"** (Hebrews 8:13). God finally abolished the old law system of Moses entirely by the Roman army that destroyed the temple and scattered the Jews abroad. He did it that way because the Jews rejected his new covenant, and would not give up the law of Moses voluntarily.

Paul in his letters to the Roman and the Galatian churches wrote much about the law. And in them he showed the great superiority of the new covenant of Christ. Indeed, Paul showed how the law of the old covenant was actually a curse that Jesus freed them from. What God has always wanted is absolute faith and trust in him, and obedience to his righteousness. And even the best legal systems do not guarantee that.

Sinners need legal systems because they are not internally motivated for righteousness. In contrast, righteous men do not need legal systems, because they want to do right. All they need is knowledge and understanding about how. Therefore, freedom is most effective with them, because they are worthy of it, and will use it to be productive for good. Freedom for sinners just allows them to sin even more. Consequently, they need the walls and chains of legal systems to restrain them.

Law After Christ

In the last Part of this book I describe the application of God's law to mankind after the establishment of the church and the end of the law of Moses. I first show from the teachings of the New Testament how Jesus Christ redeemed from condemnation all who believe in him. It was by the sacrifice of his sinless life that God gave him the right to redeem us.

I then describe the new covenant that God made through Jesus. It is a covenant based upon faith not works of law. Since we all violate the laws of God's righteousness, we all become guilty and are condemned to suffer punishment with the devil and the other adversaries of God. When we believe in Jesus, and commit our lives to him, he redeems us from that condemnation, and we become freed from legalism with God. That is the new covenant.

After that I describe how we all have the dual nature of flesh and spirit. And those two parts of us are frequently in conflict. Our flesh has been corrupted and is condemned to perish. And because our flesh is corrupt it is a frequent source of temptation to us that we must struggle to resist as long as we want to remain sons of God.

I then describe the kind of spirit and attitude that Christ expects us to have as his disciples. I contrast being too loose with his commandments with being too strict. And I use the example from his sermon on the mount about going the second mile. I also use the example of church worship to illustrate the balanced approach of "entering the narrow gate" that we should have.

After that I describe who were the people of God before the coming of Christ and the new covenant. And I show how the old covenant of the law of Moses is no longer in effect. I also show how Judaism is a false religion, not supported by the word of God, and it is a yoke upon the necks of all who strive to follow it.

Then I give some comments about the relevance of the laws of God (as described in the Bible) for all nations. I explain how Satan is now the ruler of the world, but it is still possible for a Christian people to create a nation of God whenever an opportunity arises. And I give a few suggestions about how such a nation should be created.

The book ends with some words of encouragement about keeping the laws of God.

PART ONE:
LAW IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

Part 1:1

LAW IN GENESIS

There is very little mentioned in the first book of the Bible that is specifically about law. Nevertheless, it contains many passages that tell about the laws of God; namely, about his laws of nature and his moral laws that are innate to man. Those innate moral laws can be called the common laws of God, his laws of righteousness. The laws of nature and the common laws of righteousness are not identified specifically as such. Nevertheless they are easily inferred from what the text says about the Creation, and about God's interactions with men.

THE CREATION AND NATURAL LAW

The Bible records several commands that God gave when he created the world. Since laws are rules given and enforced by authority, then the commands he gave for the Creation can be considered part of the laws of nature. That there are laws of nature is a Biblical concept. For example, when Jehovah spoke to Job during the time of his great suffering, he asked him many questions, contrasting his wisdom with man's. One of the things he asked Job was, **"Do thou know the ordinances of the heavens?"** (Job 38:33).

The first command of God recorded in the Bible says, **"Let there be light."** However, that was a special light that he replaced with a new source of light. About that new light the record says, **"And God said, Let there be lights in the firmament of heaven to divide the day from the night, and let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for days and years. And let them be for lights in the firmament of heaven to give light upon the earth. And it was so. And God made the two great lights, the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night, also the stars. And God set them in the firmament of heaven to give light upon the earth, and to rule over the day and over the night, and to divide the light from the darkness. And God saw that it was good"** (1:14-18). Those remain ordinances of the heavens.

Another passage about the Creation says: **"And God said, Let the waters swarm with swarms of living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth in the open firmament of heaven. And God created the great sea creatures, and every living creature that moves, which the waters brought forth abundantly, according to their kind, and every winged bird according to its kind. And God saw that it was good. And God blessed them, saying, Be fruitful, and multiply, and fill the waters in the seas, and let birds multiply on the earth"** (1:20-22)**.** It was by the commands of God that the creatures of the sea and the air were created. And it is by his laws of nature that they survive and reproduce. For that passage says God commanded those creatures to be fruitful and multiply. And the creatures of the sea and the air have been obeying that command ever since. We call their obedience conforming to the laws of nature, laws which God made when he created them. Of course, their obedience is not an intellectual choice, but rather submission to innate urges and instincts.

God gave a similar command to mankind when he created them. For the record says, **"And God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him, male and female he created them. And God blessed them. And God said to them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and fill the earth, and have power over it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the heavens, and over every living thing that moves upon the earth"** (1:27-28).

Thus there are laws of nature for mankind to be fruitful, multiply, fill the earth and have power over it, and have dominion over every other living thing. Consequently, we have been doing those things from the beginning of Creation, as any man with eyes can see. And we will continue doing those things, which is in great contrast with all the other creatures of the world. Unlike the animals, however, our obedience to those commands is a combination of an intellectual choice as well as submission to an innate urge, because we alone have free will.

Societies that fail to obey those laws soon fade away. Societies that obey them weakly, become weak. It is our strength to obey the laws of nature that God gave us to be fruitful, multiply, fill the earth and have power over it, and have dominion over every other living thing. And we should do those things while obeying the moral laws he gave us as well. For that is our peace and prosperity.

Moreover, it is the duty of every individual to learn to recognize and apply as many of the relevant laws of nature that he needs to foster his own development. For example, God gave us the innate ability to walk and talk. However, unless those things are practiced and cultivated they fail to develop. That is one of the important functions of children's play. Play helps them learn how to control their bodies and the things around them, and to communicate and interact with others. The need for practice and cultivation of the moral laws of God is also true of our moral development, which I discuss under the next heading.

The brief description of the Creation given at the beginning of the Bible tells about some of the natural laws God gave the world. Of course, the vast number of laws of nature that now operate in the world were no doubt also given during the week of Creation. There is evidence, however, that some laws were added or changed immediately after the great flood. One example is his creation of the rainbow as a sign he would never again destroy the earth by flood (see Genesis 9:13).

Another example concerns what could be eaten. Before the flood all creatures were vegetarians (see Genesis 1:29-30), but after the flood God allowed men to eat animals, and animals to eat each other. Perhaps it was then that carnivorous beasts were created, and who knows what else? The Bible is silent about such details. That kind of information is interesting, but not important. Let not ignorance about it trouble you. Those are things that become stumbling blocks only to unbelievers. Jehovah revealed nothing about germs when he gave his laws to Moses about cleanliness. And no doubt ignorance of germs was a great stumbling block to those who grumbled about having to obey those laws. God tests our faith in many ways.

Note: None of the laws of nature operate independently of God. From the beginning he has been actively involved in the world, and he has always reserved for himself the power to control those laws to serve his purposes. For example, it was only with God's permission that Satan could cause calamities (natural and human) against Job. And Jesus said, **"Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? And not one of them will fall on the ground independent of your Father"** (Matthew 10:29). Not one sparrow could fall then, and not one sparrow can fall now. God's invisible hand is continually involved in the activities of this world. And Christians can take comfort in these words of Paul: **"And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, who are the called according to purpose"** (Romans 8:28).

Man and Moral Law

When God made Adam the text says he **"put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it"** (2:15). He also commanded him, **"Of every tree of the garden thou may freely eat, but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shall not eat of it. For in the day that thou eat of it thou shall surely die"** (2:16-17). Sometime after Eve was created the serpent tempted her to eat fruit of the forbidden tree, and she gave to Adam who also ate of it. Eating that fruit somehow gave them knowledge of good and evil. That knowledge was no doubt not intellectual but intuitive. And it began a change in the laws of human nature. I say more about those things in Parts 3:6 and 4:4 of this book, as well as in my book *Things Natural and Things Spiritual.*

Eating that fruit not only gave knowledge of good and evil to Adam and Eve, but it also caused all men thereafter to be born with innate knowledge of right and wrong. As Paul wrote, **"For when the Gentiles who have no law do by nature the things of the law, these men, not having law, are a law to themselves. Who show the work of the law written in their hearts, testifying of their conscience, and their thoughts amidst each other accusing or also defending them in a day when God judges the secrets of men by Jesus Christ, according to my good news"** (Romans 2:14-16).

That passage says all men are born with knowledge of God's law in their hearts, meaning his moral law. Hence, our awareness of the basic differences between right and wrong is instinctive; it is, Paul said, "by nature." And it is not intellectual, it is intuitive. Ducks are born with an instinctive fear of large birds that have short necks; it is their nature. Men are born with an instinctive knowledge of basic right and wrong; it is our nature.

Of course, like walking it takes a little time for our conscience to mature. For when God cursed that faithless generation of the sons of Israel to die in the wilderness, he said, **"Moreover your little ones, who ye said would be a prey, and your sons, who this day have no knowledge of good or evil, they shall go in there, and I will give it to them, and they shall possess it"** (Deuteronomy 1:39). Also our conscience can be weakened or even destroyed. For Paul spoke of men whose consciences had been **"seared with a hot iron"** (First Timothy 4**:**2).

Just as the development of our physical skills is a result of the maturation of our innate abilities trained through education and practice, so too is the development of our moral knowledge and habits. Our conscience, with its knowledge of good and evil, is a combination of the maturation of our innate knowledge enlightened by the training we get through education and experience. This training of our moral sensibilities through practice was written about in the book of Hebrews: **"But solid food is for mature men, those having their sensibilities trained through practice for the discernment of both good and evil"** (Hebrews 5:14).

Our Innate Moral Law and God's Judgment

The Bible says nothing about laws like the ten commandments having been given for men to learn before the time of Moses. Nevertheless God held men accountable for committing evil. They were judged as Paul said men without law would be judged: by **"the law written in their hearts,"** which is our innate knowledge of right and wrong.

Regarding murder, it was only after the great flood that God commanded a law forbidding murder and specifying the penalty for it. For he said to Noah, **"And surely your blood, *the blood* of your lives, I will require. At the hand of every beast I will require it. And at the hand of man, even at the hand of every man's brother, I will require the life of man. Whoever sheds man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed. For in the image of God he made man"** (9:5-6). Many years before that time God had punished Cain, the first son of Adam, because he murdered his brother Abel. God condemned Cain by the innate law against murder that was written in his heart. However, he was not punished with the death penalty, for that law had not yet been given.

Cain murdered his brother Abel because he was angry that God respected Abel's offering of the firstlings of his flock, but not Cain's offering of the fruit of the ground. When Cain became angry because his offering was not respected, Jehovah said to him, **"Why are thou angry? And why has thy countenance fallen? If thou do well, shall thou not be accepted? And if thou do not well, sin crouches at the door. Its desire shall be for thee, and thou shall rule over it"** (4:6-7). Nevertheless, Cain murdered Abel anyway. The New Testament indicates they both knew what God wanted, for the book of Hebrews says, **"By faith Abel offered to God a better sacrifice than Cain, because of which he was reported to be righteous, God testifying about his gifts ..."** (Hebrews 11:4). How they knew is not told, but it certainly was not from their innate knowledge.

God also destroyed the entire antediluvian world with a great flood because they were so sinful, all except Noah and his family because he was righteous. And sometime after the flood Jehovah destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah because he judged them wicked. God also condemned the nations of Canaan to extinction when he brought his people Israel out of Egypt, because those nations had become so sinful. And there are other such examples. Yet there is no record in the Old Testament that he gave all mankind laws about right and wrong beyond that which is written in our hearts innately.

It was only when his Son, Jesus Christ, brought his good news of eternal salvation into the world that God gave all of mankind moral laws beyond those written in our hearts. Even the law of Moses was not for the entire world, but only for the sons of Israel. Gentiles were not judged by him according to the laws of Moses. For Paul told the Gentiles of ancient Athens that God tolerated their ignorance about him before Christ.

Those men of Athens had been worshiping idols, and Paul said to them, **"The God who made the world and all things in it, he, being Lord of heaven and earth, dwells not in temples made with hands, nor is he served by the hands of men, as needing anything, since he himself gives to all life, and breath, with all things. And he made from one blood every nation of men to dwell upon all the face of the earth, having determined prescribed times, and the limits of their occupancy, to search for the Lord, if indeed perhaps they might grope for him and find him, although being not far from each one of us. For in him we live, and move, and exist, as also some of the performers from you have said, For of him we are also offspring.**

"Being therefore offspring of God, we ought not think the Divine to be like gold, or silver, or stone handiwork of the skill and thought of man. Indeed therefore having overlooked the times of ignorance, God now commands for all men everywhere to repent. Because he appointed a day during which he is going to judge the world in righteousness by a man whom he appointed, having provided assurance to all men because he raised him from the dead" (Acts 17:24-31).

God tolerated the idolatry of the Gentiles before Christ, but he never tolerated sin against his common laws of righteousness. That is witnessed by the antediluvian world, the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah, and the nations of Canaan, all of which he condemned for destruction because of their wickedness.

Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob

A people to preserve righteousness

A few generations after the destruction of the antediluvian world, God called Abraham (who was originally named Abram) to go to a land where he would make of him a great nation. Jehovah said of him, **"For I have known him, to the end that he may command his children and his household after him, that they may keep the way of Jehovah, to do righteousness and justice, to the end that Jehovah may bring upon Abraham that which he has spoken of him"** (18:19). God chose Abraham to begin a race of people who would preserve righteousness on the earth, for he knew the world would become wicked again. That race of people was the Hebrews. Their forefathers were Abraham, his son Isaac, and his son Jacob. They were also called Israelites after Jacob, because Jacob was later named Israel, and the twelve tribes descended from him. Much later they were called Jews because the tribe of Judah is the only one of the twelve that survived conquest and exile.

For about two thousand years righteousness was preserved by those descendants of Abraham. Indeed, it was through them that the entire Holy Bible was written. However, it was

only a minority of them who preserved righteousness. As a whole those blood descendants proved unworthy. Therefore, God chose a new race of people who are the *spiritual* descendants of Abraham. And those are souls who have the kind of faith in God that Abraham had. Actually, it was only Hebrews who had that kind of faith who preserved righteousness and wrote the Bible.

That new spiritual race is the church of Jesus Christ, which consists of both Hebrews and Gentiles. When Paul was contrasting the sons of Israel, who were given the law of Moses, with disciples of Christ, he said, **"For the promise to Abraham or to his seed, for him to be heir of the world, was not through law, but through a righteousness of faith. For if those from law are heirs, faith has been made void, and the promise has been made useless. For the law works wrath. For where there is no law, neither is there transgression. Because of this it is from faith, so that it is according to grace, in order for the promise to be sure to all the seed, not only to the seed from the law, but also to the seed from the faith of Abraham, who is father of us all (as it is written, I have made thee a father of many nations), before him whom he believed, of God who makes the dead alive, and who calls things not existing, as existing"** (Romans 4:13-17). I explain those things more thoroughly in Parts 3:6 and 4:2 of this book.

Paul made it plain he was speaking of Abraham's spiritual descendants not his biological ones, because he said, **"For all those from Israel, these are not Israel, nor, because they are Abraham's seed, are they all children, rather, In Isaac a seed will be called for thee. That is, the children of the flesh, these are not children of God, instead, the children of the promise are reckoned for seed"** (Romans 9:6-8).

Abraham had other sons besides Isaac, but Isaac was the seed of God's promise. And the children of promise are not children of the flesh, they are spiritual, because they include Gentiles. For when Paul wrote to the Gentile Christians in Galatia he told them they too were Abraham's seed and heirs according to promise: **"For ye are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. For as many as were immersed into Christ have put on Christ. There is no Jew nor Greek, there is no bondman nor freeman, there is no male and female, for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. And if ye are Christ's, then ye are Abraham's seed and heirs according to promise"** (Galatians 3:26-29).

Laws for Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob

Abraham was not given a legal system to live by, but he was expected to obey God's commandments and laws for him. The Bible speaks of that when it describes a time during a famine when God appeared to Isaac. Jehovah said to him, **"Do not go down into Egypt. Dwell in the land which I shall tell thee of. Sojourn in this land, and I will be with thee, and will bless thee. For to thee, and to thy seed, I will give all these lands, and I will establish the oath that I swore to Abraham thy father. And I will multiply thy seed as the stars of heaven, and will give to thy seed all these lands, and in thy seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, because Abraham obeyed my voice, and kept my order, my commandments, my statutes, and my laws"** (26:2-5).

Abraham faithfully obeyed every command that God gave him, even the one commanding him to sacrifice his promised son Isaac upon an altar for a burnt offering. At the last moment God stopped Abraham from slaying Isaac, because it had been a test of his faith. God said to him, **"Do not lay thy hand upon the lad, neither do thou anything to him. For now I know that thou fear God, since thou have not withheld thy son, thine only son, from me"** (22**:**12).

God gave Abraham a few other commandments about specific things, such as what to do about his first son Ishmael, but the only enduring law he gave him was the rite of circumcision. God said to him, **"This is my covenant, which ye shall keep, between me and you and thy seed after thee: every male among you shall be circumcised. And ye shall be circumcised in the flesh of your foreskin, and it shall be a sign of a covenant between me and you. And he who is eight days old shall be circumcised among you, every male throughout your generations: he who is born in the house, or bought with money of any foreigner that is not of thy seed. He who is born in thy house, and he who is bought with thy money, must be circumcised. And my covenant shall be in your flesh for an everlasting covenant"** (17:10-13). The other laws Abraham obeyed must have been those common laws of righteousness that are universally recognized by all men, such as not committing murder or theft.

The record tells of no specific laws given to Isaac and Jacob, but they were given a few commands from God. And for the most part they were faithful and obedient. When Jacob was very old God commanded him to live in Egypt. It was there that the biological seed of Abraham multiplied greatly. Eventually God led them out of Egypt by the hand of Moses, and brought them to their promised land. He also gave them the legal system called the law of Moses. The story of all those things is told in the next four books of the Bible.

Part 1:2

LAW IN EXODUS

SOME HISTORY

The sons of Israel first migrated to Egypt during a great famine. Jacob was told by God to go there because God had earlier sent Jacob's son Joseph to Egypt to prepare for them. The story of Joseph, told in the last part of Genesis, is one of great trial and faith. While in Egypt the sons of Israel multiplied greatly in number. That caused the Egyptians to fear them. In response the Egyptians enslaved and oppressed them. However, Jehovah eventually sent Moses to lead his people out of Egyptian bondage. He also sent Aaron his brother to assist him. At first Pharaoh would not allow them to go. Therefore, God sent nine terrible plagues against Egypt, one after the other. Nevertheless, Pharaoh continued to refuse. He refused because God hardened his heart. God had already judged and condemned Pharaoh, but he kept him alive to manipulate him. God hardened his heart because he wanted to punish Egypt. He also wanted his people and the world to learn something about his awesome power. That would help prepare for the conquest of their promised land.

After the ninth plague Jehovah told Moses he was going to send one more. He was going to cause the death of every firstborn of the Egyptians, and after that Pharaoh would let them go. Then Jehovah gave the sons of Israel the law of the Passover. It was the first of many laws he gave them through Moses. The only other law they had from him was the one he gave their forefather Abraham about circumcision.

THE FIRST LAWS OF MOSES

The Passover

God said to Moses, **"This month shall be to you the beginning of months; it shall be the first month of the year to you. Speak ye to all the congregation of Israel, saying, In the tenth *day* of this month they shall take to them every man a lamb, according to their fathers' houses, a lamb for a household. And if the household be too little for a lamb, then he and his neighbor next to his house shall take one according to the number of the souls, according to every man's eating ye shall make your count for the lamb. Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male a year old. Ye shall take it from the sheep, or from the goats. And ye shall keep it until the fourteenth day of the same month, and the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it at evening. And they shall take of the blood, and put it on the two side-posts and on the lintel upon the houses in which they shall eat it. And they shall eat the flesh in that night, roasted with fire, and unleavened bread, with bitter herbs they shall eat it. Do not eat of it raw, nor boiled at all with water, but roasted with fire, its head with its legs and with the inwards of it. And ye shall let nothing of it remain until the morning, but that which remains of it until the morning ye shall burn with fire. And thus**

ye shall eat it: with your loins girded, your shoes on your feet, and your staff in your hand. And ye shall eat it in haste. It is Jehovah's Passover" (12:2-11).

Jehovah said he was going to smite the firstborn in Egypt the night of that feast. And the blood of the lamb was to be a sign upon the houses of the sons of Israel. For when he saw the blood he would pass over them, and would not destroy them with that plague. He said, **"And this day shall be to you for a memorial, and ye shall keep it a feast to Jehovah; throughout your generations ye shall keep it a feast by an ordinance forever"** (12:14).

The feast of unleavened bread

Then Jehovah commanded them about the feast of unleavened bread. That feast was to begin the day of Passover. He said, **"Seven days ye shall eat unleavened bread, even the first day ye shall put away leaven out of your houses, for whoever eats leavened bread from the first day until the seventh day, that soul shall be cut off from Israel. And in the first day there shall be to you a holy convocation, and in the seventh day a holy convocation, no manner of work shall be done in them, except that which every man must eat, that only may be done by you. And ye shall observe the *feast of* unleavened bread, for in this selfsame day I have brought your armies out of the land of Egypt. Therefore ye shall observe this day throughout your generations by an ordinance forever. In the first *month*, on the fourteenth day of the month at evening, ye shall eat unleavened bread, until the twenty-first day of the month at evening. Seven days there shall be no leaven found in your houses, for whoever eats that which is leavened, that soul shall be cut off from the congregation of Israel, whether he be a sojourner, or one who is born in the land. Ye shall eat nothing leavened, in all your habitations ye shall eat unleavened bread"** (12:15-20).

More commands about the Passover

Moses then called for all the elders of Israel and told them about the Passover. And he gave them another command about it, saying, **"And ye shall observe this thing for an ordinance to thee and to thy sons forever. And it shall come to pass, when ye have come to the land which Jehovah will give you, according as he has promised, that ye shall keep this service. And it shall come to pass, when your sons shall say to you, What do ye mean by this service? that ye shall say, It is the sacrifice of Jehovah's Passover, who passed over the houses of the sons of Israel in Egypt, when he smote the Egyptians, and delivered our houses"** (12:24-27). The record says the sons of Israel obeyed.

Then it says at midnight Jehovah smote all the firstborn of man and of beast in the land of Egypt. Consequently, the Egyptians, including Pharaoh, urged the sons of Israel to leave. They departed with many treasures because, at Jehovah's command, they asked from the Egyptians and they gave to them. After describing their departure the book tells more about the Passover: **"And Jehovah said to Moses and Aaron, This is the ordinance of the Passover. There shall no foreigner eat of it, but every man's servant who is**

bought for money, when thou have circumcised him, then he shall eat of it. A sojourner and a hired servant shall not eat of it. In one house it shall be eaten. Thou shall not carry forth any of the flesh abroad out of the house, neither shall ye break a bone of it. All the congregation of Israel shall keep it. And when a stranger shall sojourn with thee, and will keep the Passover to Jehovah, let all his males be circumcised, and then let him come near and keep it, and he shall be as one who is born in the land, but no uncircumcised man shall eat of it. One law shall be to him who is home-born, and to the stranger who sojourns among you" (12:43-49). The record says the sons of Israel obeyed.

Sanctify the firstborn

Next Jehovah said to Moses, **"Sanctify to me all the firstborn, whatever opens the womb among the sons of Israel. Both of man and of beast, it is mine"** (13:2). However, before the text gives details about that, it quotes Moses telling them more about the Passover and the feast of unleavened bread.

More about those feasts

Moses said to the people, **"Remember this day, in which ye came out from Egypt, out of the house of bondage, for by strength of hand Jehovah brought you out from this place. There shall no leavened bread be eaten. This day ye go forth in the month Abib. And it shall be, when Jehovah shall bring thee into the land of the Canaanite, and the Hittite, and the Amorite, and the Hivite, and the Jebusite, which he swore to thy fathers to give thee, a land flowing with milk and honey, that thou shall keep this service in this month. Seven days thou shall eat unleavened bread, and in the seventh day shall be a feast to Jehovah. Unleavened bread shall be eaten throughout the seven days, and there shall no leavened bread be seen with thee, neither shall there be leaven seen with thee in all thy borders. And thou shall tell thy son in that day, saying, It is because of that which Jehovah did for me when I came forth out of Egypt. And it shall be for a sign to thee upon thy hand, and for a memorial between thine eyes, that the law of Jehovah may be in thy mouth, for with a strong hand has Jehovah brought thee out of Egypt. Thou shall therefore keep this ordinance in its season from year to year"** (13:3-10).

God sets apart the firstborn

After that Moses gave details about the sanctification of the firstborn: **"And it shall be, when Jehovah shall bring thee into the land of the Canaanite, as he swore to thee and to thy fathers, and shall give it to thee, that thou shall set apart to Jehovah all that opens the womb. And every firstling which thou have that comes of a beast, the males shall be Jehovah's. And every firstling of a donkey thou shall redeem with a lamb, and if thou will not redeem it, then thou shall break its neck. And all the firstborn of man among thy sons thou shall redeem. And it shall be, when thy son asks thee in time to come, saying, What is this? that thou shall say to him, By strength of hand Jehovah brought us out from Egypt, from the house of bondage. And it came to pass, when Pharaoh would hardly let us go, that Jehovah slew all the firstborn in**

the land of Egypt, both the firstborn of man, and the firstborn of beast. Therefore I sacrifice to Jehovah all that opens the womb, being males, but all the firstborn of my sons I redeem. And it shall be for a sign upon thy hand, and for frontlets between thine eyes, for by strength of hand Jehovah brought us forth out of Egypt" (13:11-16).

Some History

Next the book tells more about the Exodus. After the sons of Israel had traveled a while Pharaoh and his army began to pursue them. When the people saw it they cried out and criticized Moses, condemning him for leading them out. They said they would rather serve the Egyptians than die in the wilderness. However, Jehovah caused the Red Sea to separate, which created dry ground for them to escape. When Pharaoh and his army tried to follow, God brought the waters back together and they were drowned. When that happened Moses sang a song of victory to Jehovah, the words of which are in the text. It also says his sister Miriam led all the women with song and dances.

Bread from Heaven

After traveling three days in the wilderness the people criticized Moses because they found no water. So Jehovah provided water for them. Later, when the people complained about being hungry, Jehovah said, **"Behold, I will rain bread from heaven for you, and the people shall go out and gather a day's portion every day, that I may prove them, whether they will walk in my law, or not. And it shall come to pass on the sixth day, that they shall prepare that which they bring in, and it shall be twice as much as they gather daily"** (16:4-5). That bread appeared with the morning dew. God commanded them to gather what they needed of it each day, but not try to save it for the next day. Nevertheless, some did, and it bred worms and became foul. God also gave them quails to eat.

The Sabbath Day

Then Moses gave them the law about the sabbath. He said, **"This is that which Jehovah has spoken, Tomorrow is a solemn rest, a holy sabbath to Jehovah. Bake that which ye will bake, and boil that which ye will boil, and all that remains over lay up for you to be kept until the morning. And they laid it up till the morning, as Moses bade, and it did not become foul, neither was there any worm in it. And Moses said, Eat that today, for today is a sabbath to Jehovah. Today ye shall not find it in the field. Six days ye shall gather it, but on the seventh day is the sabbath, there shall be none in it. And it came to pass on the seventh day, that some of the people went out to gather, and they found none. And Jehovah said to Moses, How long do ye refuse to keep my commandments and my laws? See, because Jehovah has given you the sabbath, therefore he gives you on the sixth day the bread of two days. Abide ye every man in his place. Let no man go out of his place on the seventh day"** (16:23-29). The book says the people rested on the seventh day.

The Manna

After giving a little more history, the text says more about the bread from heaven: **"And the house of Israel called the name of it Manna. And it was like coriander seed, white, and the taste of it was like wafers with honey. And Moses said, This is the thing which Jehovah has commanded. Let an omerful of it be kept throughout your generations, that they may see the bread with which I fed you in the wilderness, when I brought you forth from the land of Egypt. And Moses said to Aaron, Take a pot, and put an omerful of manna in it, and lay it up before Jehovah, to be kept throughout your generations. As Jehovah commanded Moses, so Aaron laid it up before the Testimony, to be kept"** (16:31-34).

Notice that command mentions the Testimony, which refers to the stone tablets with the ten commandments written upon them, and that was kept in the ark of the covenant. However, those things were not given until much later. That is an illustration showing how the histories of the Bible are not always written in chronological order. There are many other examples of such things recorded in their history; events that came earlier or later out of sequence in a particular story. Therefore, be not troubled when you see things such as this.

More History

As they continued their journey they began to lack water again. That caused them to again contend with Moses and murmur against him, saying, **"Why have thou brought us up out of Egypt, to kill us and our sons and our cattle with thirst?"** (17:3). And they challenged Jehovah wanting to know if he was with them or not. They were so aggressive that Moses told God they were almost ready to stone him. Then Jehovah told Moses how to get water for them.

After that the Amalekites came and fought with Israel. That so angered God he said to Moses, **"Write this for a memorial in a book, and rehearse it in the ears of Joshua: that I will utterly blot out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven"** (17:14). Centuries later Jehovah commanded king Saul to exterminate them.

A Hierarchy of Judges

Sometime afterward Moses' father-in-law Jethro brought Moses' wife and his two sons to him. After their greeting, Jethro made a burnt offering and sacrifices to God. Then Moses and Jethro ate bread with the elders of Israel. On the morrow Moses sat to judge the people. And when Jethro saw it, he said, **"The thing that thou do is not good. Thou will surely wear away, both thou, and this people that is with thee, for the thing is too heavy for thee. Thou are not able to perform it thyself alone. Hearken now to my voice. I will give thee counsel, and God be with thee. Be thou for the people toward God, and bring thou the cases to God. And thou shall teach them the statutes and the laws, and shall show them the way in which they must walk, and the work that they must do. Moreover thou shall provide out of all the people able men, such as fear God, men of truth, hating unjust gain, and place such over them, to be rulers of thousands, rulers of hun-**

dreds, rulers of fifties, and rulers of tens, and let them judge the people at all seasons. And it shall be, that every great matter they shall bring to thee, but every small matter they shall judge themselves. So shall it be easier for thyself, and they shall bear *the burden* with thee. If thou shall do this thing, and God command thee so, then thou shall be able to endure, and all this people also shall go to their place in peace" (18:17-23). Since Moses hearkened to him and did as he advised, then God must have commanded him so. Then Jethro departed to his own land.

The Covenant

In the third month of their Exodus they arrived at mount Sinai. Jehovah encouraged them many times during their travels, and that was the first thing he did at the mountain. The text says, **"And Moses went up to God. And Jehovah called to him out of the mountain, saying, Thus thou shall say to the house of Jacob, and tell the sons of Israel: Ye have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles' wings, and brought you to myself. Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be my own possession from among all peoples, for all the earth is mine, and ye shall be to me a kingdom of priests, and a holy nation. These are the words which thou shall speak to the sons of Israel"** (19:3-6).

That covenant was what Christians call the old covenant, which involved the laws of Moses and the sons of Israel. After Moses told the elders those words the book says, **"And all the people answered together, and said, All that Jehovah has spoken we will do"** (19:8). The old covenant was the agreement that Jehovah would bless the sons of Israel if they would obey his words.

The Ten Commandments

After that God commanded them to sanctify and cleanse themselves for the third day, because he was going to come down in their sight upon the mountain. On the third day when he came down there were thunders and lightnings and a thick cloud upon it. The whole mountain smoked, and there was a voice of an exceedingly loud trumpet. All of that naturally caused the people to tremble with fear. God commanded Moses to make the mountain secure so they would not come upon it and perish. Then God spoke directly with a mighty voice to the people, and he said,

- **I am Jehovah thy God, who brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. Thou shall have no other gods before me.**
- **Thou shall not make to thee a graven image, nor any likeness *of anything* that is in heaven above, or that is on the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. Thou shall not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them, for I, Jehovah thy God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the sons, upon the third and upon the fourth generation of those who hate me, and showing loving kindness to thousands of those who love me and keep my commandments.**
- **Thou shall not take the name of Jehovah thy God in vain, for Jehovah will not hold him guiltless who takes his name in vain.**

- **Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days thou shall labor, and do all thy work, but the seventh day is a sabbath to Jehovah thy God. Thou shall not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy man-servant, nor thy maid-servant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates, for in six days Jehovah made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested the seventh day. Therefore Jehovah blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it.**
- **Honor thy father and thy mother, that thy days may be long in the land which Jehovah thy God gives thee.**
- **Thou shall not murder.**
- **Thou shall not commit adultery.**
- **Thou shall not steal.**
- **Thou shall not bear false witness against thy neighbor.**
- **Thou shall not covet thy neighbor's house. Thou shall not covet thy neighbor's wife, nor his man-servant, nor his maid-servant, nor his ox, nor his donkey, nor anything that is thy neighbor's** (20:2-17).

That was the only time God ever spoke directly to the people. All other times he used Moses to communicate with them. That experience was so terrifying they pleaded with Moses to speak to them for God, and not God directly. Moses said God wanted them to fear him so they would not sin. Then Moses drew near the thick darkness where God was, and Jehovah again warned against other gods: **"Thus thou shall say to the sons of Israel, Ye yourselves have seen that I have talked with you from heaven. Ye shall not make *other gods* with me; gods of silver, or gods of gold, ye shall not make to you"** (20:22-23). That was another warning against making other gods. Jehovah knew what was in their hearts, for not long afterward they made a golden calf and began worshiping it. Next God gave Moses many more laws.

More Laws

How to build an altar

"An altar of earth thou shall make to me, and shall sacrifice on it thy burnt offerings, and thy peace offerings, thy sheep, and thine oxen. In every place where I record my name I will come to thee and I will bless thee. And if thou make to me an altar of stone, thou shall not build it of hewn stones, for if thou lift up thy tool upon it, thou have polluted it. Neither shall thou go up by steps to my altar, that thy nakedness be not uncovered on it" (20:24-26).

Bond service

"If thou buy a Hebrew servant, six years he shall serve, and in the seventh he shall go out free for nothing. If he comes in by himself, he shall go out by himself. If he be married, then his wife shall go out with him. If his master gives him a wife and she bears him sons or daughters, the wife and her sons shall be her master's, and he shall go out by himself. But if the servant shall plainly say, I love my master, my wife, and my sons, I will not go out free, then his master shall bring him to God, and shall bring

him to the door, or to the door-post, and his master shall bore his ear through with an awl, and he shall serve him forever.

"And if a man sells his daughter to be a maid-servant, she shall not go out as the men-servants do. If she does not please her master, who has espoused her to himself, then he shall let her be redeemed. He shall have no power to sell her to a foreign people, since he has dealt deceitfully with her. And if he espouses her to his son, he shall deal with her according to the manner of daughters. If he takes him another *wife*, her food, her raiment, and her duty of marriage, he shall not diminish. And if he does not do these three things to her, then she shall go out for nothing, without money" (21:2-11).

Willful and accidental killing of men

"He who smites a man, so that he dies, shall surely be put to death. And if a man does not lie in wait, but God delivers *him* into his hand, then I will appoint for thee a place where he shall flee. And if a man comes presumptuously upon his neighbor, to kill him with guile, thou shall take him from my altar, that he may die" (21:12-14). The expression **"God delivers him into his hand"** refers to accidental killing. That expression makes it clear that no death can occur without God allowing it. As Jesus said to his disciples, **"Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? And not one of them will fall on the ground independent of your Father"** (Matthew 10:29). The law later gave provisions for cities of refuge where manslayers, but not murderers, could flee for protection against the avengers of blood. An avenger of blood was a relative of the victim, and he was given the right to slay the killer.

Smiting your father or mother

"And he who smites his father or his mother, shall surely be put to death" (21:15).

Kidnapping

"And he who steals a man, and sells him, or if he be found in his hand, he shall surely be put to death" (21:16).

Cursing your father or mother

"And he who curses his father or his mother, shall surely be put to death" (21:17).

Assault

"And if men contend, and one smites the other with a stone, or with his fist, and he does not die, but keeps his bed, if he rises again, and walks abroad upon his staff, then he who smote him shall be acquitted. Only he shall pay for the loss of his time, and shall cause him to be thoroughly healed.

"And if a man smites his servant, or his maid, with a rod, and he dies under his hand, he shall surely be punished. Notwithstanding, if he continues a day or two, he shall not be punished, for he is his money.

"And if men strive together, and hurt a woman with child, so that her fruit depart, and yet no harm follow, he shall be surely fined, according as the woman's husband shall lay upon him, and he shall pay as the judges determine. But if any harm follows, then thou shall give life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, burning for burning, wound for wound, stripe for stripe.

"And if a man smites the eye of his servant, or the eye of his maid, and destroys it, he shall let him go free for his eye's sake. And if he knocks out his man-servant's tooth, or his maid-servant's tooth, he shall let him go free for his tooth's sake.

"And if an ox gores a man or a woman to death, the ox shall surely be stoned, and its flesh shall not be eaten, but the owner of the ox shall be acquitted. But if the ox was accustomed to gore in time past, and it has been testified to its owner, and he has not kept it in, but it has killed a man or a woman, the ox shall be stoned, and its owner shall also be put to death. If a ransom is laid on him, then he shall give for the redemption of his life whatever is laid upon him. Whether it has gored a son, or has gored a daughter, according to this judgment it shall be done to him. If the ox gores a man-servant or a maid-servant, there shall be given to their master thirty shekels of silver, and the ox shall be stoned" (21:18-32).

Harm to livestock

"And if a man shall open a pit, or if a man shall dig a pit and not cover it, and an ox or a donkey falls in it, the owner of the pit shall make it good; he shall give money to the owner of it, and the dead *beast* shall be his. And if one man's ox hurts another's, so that it dies, then they shall sell the live ox, and divide the price of it, and the dead they shall also divide. Or if it be known that the ox was accustomed to gore in time past, and its owner has not kept it in, he shall surely pay ox for ox, and the dead *beast* shall be his own" (21:33-36).

Theft

"If a man shall steal an ox, or a sheep, and kill it, or sell it, he shall pay five oxen for an ox, and four sheep for a sheep. If the thief is found breaking in, and be smitten so that he dies, there shall be no bloodguiltiness for him. If the sun be risen upon him, there shall be bloodguiltiness for him. *A thief* shall make restitution. If he has nothing, then he shall be sold for his theft. If the theft is found in his hand alive, whether it be ox, or donkey, or sheep, he shall pay double" (22:1-4).

Harm to crops

"If a man shall cause a field or vineyard to be eaten, and shall let his beast loose, and it feeds in another man's field, he shall make restitution of the best of his own field, and of the best of his own vineyard. If fire breaks out, and catches in thorns, so that the shocks of grain, or the standing grain, or the field are consumed, he who kindled the fire shall surely make restitution" (22:5-6).

Lending and borrowing

"If a man shall deliver to his neighbor money or stuff to keep, and it be stolen out of the man's house, if the thief be found, he shall pay double. If the thief is not found, then the master of the house shall come near to God, *to see* whether he has not put his hand to his neighbor's goods. For every matter of trespass, whether it be for ox, for donkey, for sheep, for raiment, *or* for any manner of lost thing, of which a man says, This is it, the case of both parties shall come before God. He whom God shall condemn shall pay double to his neighbor.

"If a man delivers to his neighbor a donkey, or an ox, or a sheep, or any beast, to keep, and it dies, or be hurt, or driven away, no man seeing it, the oath of Jehovah shall be between them both, whether he has not put his hand to his neighbor's goods. And the owner of it shall accept it, and he shall not make restitution. But if it is stolen from him, he shall make restitution to the owner of it. If it is torn in pieces, let him bring it for evidence. He shall not make good that which was torn.

"And if a man borrows anything of his neighbor, and it be hurt, or die, the owner of it not being with it, he shall surely make restitution. If the owner of it is with it, he shall not make it good. If it be a hired thing, it came for its hire" (22:7-15).

Enticing a virgin

"And if a man entices a virgin who is not betrothed, and lies with her, he shall surely pay a dowry for her to be his wife. If her father utterly refuses to give her to him, he shall pay money according to the dowry of virgins" (22:17).

A sorceress

"Thou shall not allow a sorceress to live" (22:18).

Bestiality

"Whoever lies with a beast shall surely be put to death" (22:19).

Sacrificing to any other god

"He who sacrifices to any god, except to Jehovah only, shall be utterly destroyed" (22:20).

The weak and lowly

"And thou shall not wrong a sojourner, neither shall thou oppress him, for ye were sojourners in the land of Egypt.

"Ye shall not afflict any widow, or fatherless child. If thou afflict them at all, and they cry at all to me, I will surely hear their cry, and my wrath shall grow hot, and I will kill you with the sword, and your wives shall be widows, and your sons fatherless" (22:21-24).

Lending money

"If thou lend money to any of my people with thee who is poor, thou shall not be to him as a creditor, neither shall ye lay upon him interest. If thou at all take thy neighbor's garment to pledge, thou shall restore it to him before the sun goes down, for that is his only covering. It is his garment for his skin. How shall he sleep? And it shall come to pass, when he cries to me, that I will hear, for I am gracious" (22:25-27).

Speaking ill of God or a ruler

"Thou shall not revile God, nor speak ill of a ruler of thy people" (22:28).

The first-fruits and the firstborn

"Thou shall not delay to offer from thy harvest, and from the outflow of thy presses. The firstborn of thy sons thou shall give to me. Likewise thou shall do with thine oxen, *and* with thy sheep. Seven days it shall be with its dam. On the eighth day thou shall give it me" (22:29-30).

Eating what was torn

"And ye shall be holy men to me. Therefore ye shall not eat any flesh that is torn of beasts in the field. Ye shall cast it to the dogs" (22:31).

False reports

"Thou shall not take up a false report. Do not put thy hand with the wicked man to be an unrighteous witness" (23:1).

Doing unjustly

"Thou shall not follow a multitude to do evil, neither shall thou speak in a case to turn aside after a multitude to distort justice, neither shall thou favor a poor man in his case" (23:2-3).

Care for the property of enemies

"If thou meet thine enemy's ox or his donkey going astray, thou shall surely bring it back to him again. If thou see the donkey of him who hates thee lying under his burden, thou shall refrain leaving him. Thou shall surely release *it* with him" (23:4-5).

Distorting justice

"Thou shall not distort the justice *due* to thy poor in his case. Keep thee far from a false matter" (23:6-7).

Killing an innocent man

"And do not kill an innocent and righteous man, for I will not justify a wicked man" (23:7).

Bribery

"And thou shall take no bribe, for a bribe blinds those who have sight, and perverts the words of the righteous" (23:8).

Oppressing sojourners

"And thou shall not oppress a sojourner, for ye know the heart of a sojourner, since ye were sojourners in the land of Egypt" (23:9).

Sabbath for the land

"And six years thou shall sow thy land, and shall gather in the increase of it, but the seventh year thou shall let it rest and lie fallow, that the poor of thy people may eat, and what they leave the beast of the field shall eat. In like manner thou shall deal with thy vineyard, *and* with thy oliveyard" (23:10-11).

The sabbath day

"Six days thou shall do thy work, and on the seventh day thou shall rest, that thine ox and thy donkey may have rest, and the son of thy handmaid, and the sojourner, may be refreshed" (23:12).

Speak no name of a god

"And in all things that I have said to you take ye heed, and make no mention of the name of other gods, neither let it be heard out of thy mouth" (23:13).

The three annual feasts

"Three times thou shall keep a feast to me in the year. Thou shall keep the feast of unleavened bread (Seven days thou shall eat unleavened bread, as I commanded thee, at the time appointed in the month Abib, for in it thou came out from Egypt, and none shall appear before me empty), and the feast of harvest, the first-fruits of thy labors, which thou sow in the field, and the feast of ingathering at the end of the year, when thou gather in thy labors out of the field. Three times in the year all thy males shall appear before the lord Jehovah" (23:14-17).

Blood and fat of sacrifices

"Thou shall not offer the blood of my sacrifice with leavened bread, neither shall the fat of my feast remain all night until the morning" (23:18).

The first-fruits

"The first of the first-fruits of thy ground thou shall bring into the house of Jehovah thy God" (23:19).

Boiling a kid

"Thou shall not boil a kid in its mother's milk" (23:19).

More History

Then Jehovah said, **"Behold, I send an agent before thee, to keep thee by the way, and to bring thee into the place which I have prepared. Take ye heed before him, and hearken to his voice, provoke him not. For he will not pardon your transgression, for my name is in him. But if thou shall indeed hearken to his voice, and do all that I speak, then I will be an enemy to thine enemies, and an adversary to thine adversaries. For my agent shall go before thee, and bring thee in to the Amorite, and the Hittite, and the Perizzite, and the Canaanite, the Hivite, and the Jebusite, and I will cut them off. Thou shall not bow down to their gods, nor serve them, nor do after their works, but thou shall utterly overthrow them, and break their pillars in pieces"** (23:20-24).

Jehovah said if they were obedient he would bless them and defeat their enemies. He even said he would send the hornet before them to drive out those peoples. And he would drive them out little by little so the land would not become desolate before they settled in it. And he again warned them, **"Thou shall make no covenant with them, nor with their gods. They shall not dwell in thy land, lest they make thee sin against me, for if thou serve their gods, it will surely be a snare to thee"** (23:32-33).

Next Jehovah commanded Moses to bring Aaron, his two eldest sons, and seventy of the elders of Israel up on the mount to worship him from afar off. Moses alone was to come near Jehovah. When Moses told the people all the words of Jehovah and all the ordinances, they said to him, **"All the words which Jehovah has spoken will we do"** (24:3). The record says Moses wrote all the words of Jehovah, and then he built an altar with twelve pillars, according to the twelve tribes of Israel. And he sent young men to offer burnt offerings and sacrifice peace offerings of oxen to Jehovah. He also took the book of the covenant and read in the audience of the people. And they said, **"All that Jehovah has spoken will we do, and be obedient"** (24:7). Then Moses sprinkled blood from the sacrifices on the people, and said, **"Behold the blood of the covenant that Jehovah has made with you concerning all these words"** (24:8).

Notice how quickly the people promised to do all that Jehovah spoke to them. Yet within a few weeks they forsook him and began worshiping an idol of a dumb animal. What Jesus said about the scholars and Pharisees also describes those sons of Israel who were with Moses: **"Ye hypocrites, well did Isaiah prophesy about you, saying, This people comes near me with their mouth, and honors me with their lips, but their heart is far distant from me"** (Matthew 15:7-8).

After those things Moses took Aaron and the other men, and went upon the mount. And the book says, **"And they saw the God of Israel. And there was under his feet as it were a paved work of sapphire stone, and as it were the very heaven for clearness. And he laid not his hand upon the nobles of the sons of Israel. And they beheld God, and ate and drank"** (24:10-11). Next Jehovah told Moses to come up and he would give him the tablets of stone, and the law and the commandment so that he may teach them. Moses took

Joshua his minister with him, and he commanded the elders to wait for them to return. The book says he was on the mount forty days and forty nights.

The Tabernacle

While he was on the mountain Jehovah commanded him how to make the tabernacle, which would be a portable sanctuary for him. Jehovah described in great detail how the tent, all its furnishings, and the priest's garments were to be made.

The materials

"Speak to the sons of Israel, that they take for me an offering; of every man whose heart makes him willing ye shall take my offering. And this is the offering which ye shall take of them: gold, and silver, and brass, and blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine linen, and goats' *hair*, and rams' skins dyed red, and *certain* skins, and acacia wood, oil for the light, spices for the anointing oil and for the sweet incense, onyx stones, and stones to be set for the ephod and for the breastplate. And let them make me a sanctuary, that I may dwell among them. According to all that I show thee: the pattern of the tabernacle, and the pattern of all the furniture of it, even so shall ye make it" (25:2-9).

The ark of the covenant

"And they shall make an ark of acacia wood. Two cubits and a half shall be the length of it, and a cubit and a half the breadth of it, and a cubit and a half the height of it. And thou shall overlay it with pure gold. Inside and outside thou shall overlay it, and shall make upon it a crown of gold round about. And thou shall cast four rings of gold for it, and put them in the four feet of it. And two rings shall be on the one side of it, and two rings on the other side of it. And thou shall make staves of acacia wood, and overlay them with gold. And thou shall put the staves into the rings on the sides of the ark, with which to bear the ark. The staves shall be in the rings of the ark; they shall not be taken from it. And thou shall put into the ark the testimony which I shall give thee. And thou shall make a mercy-seat of pure gold: two cubits and a half the length of it, and a cubit and a half the breadth of it" (25:10-17).

The cherubim

"And thou shall make two cherubim of gold; of beaten work shall thou make them, at the two ends of the mercy-seat. And make one cherub at the one end, and one cherub at the other end; of one piece with the mercy-seat ye shall make the cherubim on the two ends of it. And the cherubim shall spread out their wings on high, covering the mercy-seat with their wings, with their faces one to another; the faces of the cherubim shall be toward the mercy-seat. And thou shall put the mercy-seat above upon the ark. And in the ark thou shall put the testimony that I shall give thee. And there I will meet with thee. And I will commune with thee from above the mercy-seat, from between the two cherubim which are upon the ark of the testi-

mony, of all things which I will give thee in commandment to the sons of Israel" (25:19-22).

The table for showbread

"And thou shall make a table of acacia wood, two cubits the length of it, and a cubit the breadth of it, and a cubit and a half the height of it. And thou shall overlay it with pure gold, and make thereto a crown of gold round about. And thou shall make to it a border of a handbreadth round about, and thou shall make a golden crown to the border of it round about. And thou shall make for it four rings of gold, and put the rings in the four corners that are on the four feet of it. The rings shall be close by the border, for places for the staves to bear the table. And thou shall make the staves of acacia wood, and overlay them with gold, that the table may be borne with them. And thou shall make the dishes of it, and the spoons of it, and the pitchers of it, and the bowls of it, with which to pour out, of pure gold thou shall make them. And thou shall set upon the table showbread before me always" (25:23-30).

The lampstand

"And thou shall make a lampstand of pure gold. Of beaten work shall the lampstand be made, even its base, and its shaft, its cups, its knobs, and its flowers, shall be of one piece with it. And there shall be six branches going out of the sides of it, three branches of the lampstand out of the one side of it, and three branches of the lampstand out of the other side of it: three cups made like almond-blossoms in one branch, a knob and a flower, and three cups made like almond-blossoms in the other branch, a knob and a flower, so for the six branches going out of the lampstand, and in the lampstand four cups made like almond-blossoms, the knobs of it, and the flowers of it. And a knob under two branches of one piece with it, and a knob under two branches of one piece with it, and a knob under two branches of one piece with it, for the six branches going out of the lampstand.

"Their knobs and their branches shall be of one piece with it, the whole of it one beaten work of pure gold. And thou shall make the lamps of it, seven. And they shall light the lamps of it, to give light in front of it. And the snuffers of it, and the snuff dishes of it, shall be of pure gold. Of a talent of pure gold shall it be made, with all these vessels. And see that thou make *them* according to their pattern that has been shown thee on the mountain" (25:31-40).

The interior curtains

"Moreover thou shall make the tabernacle with ten curtains, of fine twined linen, and blue, and purple, and scarlet, with cherubim the work of the skilful workman shall thou make them. The length of each curtain shall be twenty-eight cubits, and the breadth of each curtain four cubits. All the curtains shall have one measure. Five curtains shall be coupled together one to another, and *the other* five curtains shall be coupled one to another. And thou shall make loops of blue upon the edge of the one curtain from the selvedge in the coupling, and likewise thou shall make in the edge

of the curtain that is outmost in the second coupling. Fifty loops thou shall make in the one curtain, and fifty loops thou shall make in the edge of the curtain that is in the second coupling; the loops shall be opposite one to another. And thou shall make fifty clasps of gold, and couple the curtains one to another with the clasps. And the tabernacle shall be one *whole*" (26:1-6).

The exterior curtains

"And thou shall make curtains of goats' *hair* for a tent over the tabernacle. Eleven curtains thou shall make them. The length of each curtain shall be thirty cubits, and the breadth of each curtain four cubits. The eleven curtains shall have one measure. And thou shall couple five curtains by themselves, and six curtains by themselves, and shall double over the sixth curtain in the forefront of the tent. And thou shall make fifty loops on the edge of the one curtain that is outmost in the coupling, and fifty loops upon the edge of the curtain which is *outmost in* the second coupling. And thou shall make fifty clasps of brass, and put the clasps into the loops, and couple the tent together, that it may be one. And the overhanging part that remains of the curtains of the tent, the half curtain that remains, shall hang over the back of the tabernacle. And the cubit on the one side, and the cubit on the other side, of that which remains in the length of the curtains of the tent, shall hang over the sides of the tabernacle on this side and on that side, to cover it. And thou shall make a covering for the tent of rams' skins dyed red, and a covering of *certain* skins above" (26:8-14).

The framework

"And thou shall make the boards for the tabernacle of acacia wood, standing up. Ten cubits shall be the length of a board, and a cubit and a half the breadth of each board. There shall be two tenons in each board, joined one to another. Thus thou shall make for all the boards of the tabernacle. And thou shall make the boards for the tabernacle, twenty boards for the south side southward. And thou shall make forty sockets of silver under the twenty boards: two sockets under one board for its two tenons, and two sockets under another board for its two tenons. And for the second side of the tabernacle, on the north side, twenty boards, and their forty sockets of silver: two sockets under one board, and two sockets under another board. And for the hinder part of the tabernacle westward thou shall make six boards. And thou shall make two boards for the corners of the tabernacle in the hinder part. And they shall be double beneath, and in like manner they shall be entire to the top of it to one ring. Thus shall it be for them both, they shall be for the two corners. And there shall be eight boards, and their sockets of silver, sixteen sockets: two sockets under one board, and two sockets under another board.

"And thou shall make bars of acacia wood: five for the boards of the one side of the tabernacle, and five bars for the boards of the other side of the tabernacle, and five bars for the boards of the side of the tabernacle, for the hinder part westward. And the middle bar in the midst of the boards shall pass through from end to end. And thou shall overlay the boards with gold, and make their rings of gold for places for

the bars. And thou shall overlay the bars with gold. And thou shall raise up the tabernacle according to the fashion of it which has been shown thee on the mount" (26:15-30).

The veil

"And thou shall make a veil of blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine twined linen. With cherubim the work of the skilful workman shall it be made. And thou shall hang it upon four pillars of acacia overlaid with gold, their hooks *shall be* of gold, upon four sockets of silver. And thou shall hang up the veil under the clasps, and shall bring in there within the veil the ark of the testimony. And the veil shall separate to you between the holy place and the most holy" (26:31-33).

Arranging the furniture

"And thou shall put the mercy-seat upon the ark of the testimony in the most holy place. And thou shall set the table outside the veil, and the lampstand opposite the table on the side of the tabernacle toward the south. And thou shall put the table on the north side" (26:34-35).

The screen

"And thou shall make a screen for the door of the tent, of blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine twined linen, the work of the embroiderer. And thou shall make for the screen five pillars of acacia, and overlay them with gold. Their hooks shall be of gold, and thou shall cast five sockets of brass for them" (26:36-37).

The altar of burnt offerings

"And thou shall make the altar of acacia wood, five cubits long, and five cubits broad (the altar shall be foursquare), and the height of it shall be three cubits. And thou shall make the horns of it upon the four corners of it. The horns of it shall be of one piece with it, and thou shall overlay it with brass. And thou shall make its pots to take away its ashes, and its shovels, and its basins, and its flesh-hooks, and its firepans; all the vessels of it thou shall make of brass. And thou shall make for it a grating of network of brass, and upon the network thou shall make four brazen rings in the four corners of it. And thou shall put it under the ledge round the altar beneath, that the network may reach halfway up the altar. And thou shall make staves for the altar, staves of acacia wood, and overlay them with brass. And the staves of it shall be put into the rings, and the staves shall be upon the two sides of the altar, in bearing it. Thou shall make it hollow with planks. As it has been shown thee on the mount, so shall they make it" (27:1-8).

The court

"And thou shall make the court of the tabernacle. For the south side southward there shall be hangings for the court of fine twined linen a hundred cubits long for one side. And the pillars of it shall be twenty, and their sockets twenty, of brass. The hooks of the pillars and their bands *shall be* of silver. And likewise for the north side

in length there shall be hangings a hundred cubits long, and the pillars of it twenty, and their sockets twenty, of brass, the hooks of the pillars and their bands, of silver. And for the breadth of the court on the west side shall be hangings of fifty cubits, their pillars ten, and their sockets ten. And the breadth of the court on the east side eastward shall be fifty cubits. The hangings for the one side *of the gate* shall be fifteen cubits, their pillars three, and their sockets three. And for the other side shall be hangings of fifteen cubits, their pillars three, and their sockets three. And for the gate of the court shall be a screen of twenty cubits, of blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine twined linen, the work of the embroiderer, their pillars four, and their sockets four.

"All the pillars of the court round about shall be banded with silver, their hooks of silver, and their sockets of brass. The length of the court shall be a hundred cubits, and the breadth fifty everywhere, and the height five cubits, of fine twined linen, and their sockets of brass. All the instruments of the tabernacle in all the service of it, and all the pegs of it, and all the pegs of the court, shall be of brass" (27:9-19).

The lamp oil

"And thou shall command the sons of Israel, that they bring to thee pure beaten olive oil for the light, to cause a lamp to burn continually in the tent of meeting, outside the veil which is before the testimony. Aaron and his sons shall keep it in order from evening to morning before Jehovah. It shall be a statute forever throughout their generations on the behalf of the sons of Israel" (27:20-21).

The Priest's Garments

Special garments for Aaron and his sons

"And bring thou near to thee Aaron thy brother, and his sons with him, from among the sons of Israel, that he may minister to me in the priest's office, even Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, Eleazar and Ithamar, Aaron's sons. And thou shall make holy garments for Aaron thy brother, for glory and for beauty. And thou shall speak to all who are wise-hearted, whom I have filled with the spirit of wisdom, that they make Aaron's garments to sanctify him, that he may minister to me in the priest's office. And these are the garments which they shall make: a breastplate, and an ephod, and a robe, and a tunic of checker work, a miter, and a sash. And they shall make holy garments for Aaron thy brother, and his sons, that he may minister to me in the priest's office" (28:1-4).

The ephod

"And they shall take the gold, and the blue, and the purple, and the scarlet, and the fine linen. And they shall make the ephod of gold, of blue, and purple, scarlet, and fine twined linen, the work of the skilful workman. It shall have two shoulder-pieces joined to the two ends of it, that it may be joined together. And the skillfully woven band, which is upon it, with which to gird it on, shall be like the work of it *and* of the

same piece, of gold, of blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine twined linen. And thou shall take two onyx stones, and engrave on them the names of the sons of Israel: six of their names on the one stone, and the names of the six that remain on the other stone, according to their birth. With the work of an engraver in stone, like the engravings of a signet, thou shall engrave the two stones, according to the names of the sons of Israel. Thou shall make them to be enclosed in settings of gold.

"And thou shall put the two stones upon the shoulder-pieces of the ephod, to be stones of memorial for the sons of Israel. And Aaron shall bear their names before Jehovah upon his two shoulders for a memorial. And thou shall make settings of gold, and two chains of pure gold, like cords shall thou make them, of wreathen work. And thou shall put the wreathen chains on the settings" (28:5-14).

The breastplate

"And thou shall make a breastplate of judgment, the work of the skilful workman. Thou shall make it like the work of the ephod: of gold, of blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine twined linen, thou shall make it. It shall be foursquare *and* double, a span shall be the length of it, and a span the breadth of it. And thou shall set in it settings of stones, four rows of stones: a row of sardius, topaz, and carbuncle shall be the first row, and the second row an emerald, a sapphire, and a diamond, and the third row a jacinth, an agate, and an amethyst, and the fourth row a beryl, and an onyx, and a jasper. They shall be enclosed in gold in their settings. And the stones shall be according to the names of the sons of Israel, twelve, according to their names, like the engravings of a signet, every one according to his name; they shall be for the twelve tribes" (28:15-21).

Chains for the breastplate

"And thou shall make upon the breastplate chains like cords, of wreathen work of pure gold. And thou shall make upon the breastplate two rings of gold, and shall put the two rings on the two ends of the breastplate. And thou shall put the two wreathen chains of gold in the two rings at the ends of the breastplate. And the *other* two ends of the two wreathen chains thou shall put on the two settings, and put them on the shoulder-pieces of the ephod in the forepart of it" (28:22-25).

Rings for the breastplate

"And thou shall make two rings of gold, and thou shall put them upon the two ends of the breastplate, upon the edge of it, which is toward the side of the ephod inward. And thou shall make two rings of gold, and shall put them on the two shoulder-pieces of the ephod underneath, in the forepart of it, close by the coupling of it, above the skillfully woven band of the ephod. And they shall bind the breastplate by the rings of it to the rings of the ephod with a lace of blue, that it may be upon the skillfully woven band of the ephod, and that the breastplate be not loosed from the ephod" (28:26-28).

The Urim and the Thummim

"And Aaron shall bear the names of the sons of Israel in the breastplate of judgment upon his heart, when he goes in to the holy place, for a memorial before Jehovah continually. And thou shall put in the breastplate of judgment the Urim and the Thummim, and they shall be upon Aaron's heart, when he goes in before Jehovah. And Aaron shall bear the judgment of the sons of Israel upon his heart before Jehovah continually" (28:29-30).

The robe

"And thou shall make the robe of the ephod all of blue. And it shall have a hole for the head in the midst of it. It shall have a binding of woven work round about the hole of it, as it were the hole of a coat of mail, that it be not torn. And upon the skirts of it thou shall make pomegranates of blue, and of purple, and of scarlet, round about the skirts of it, and bells of gold between them round about: a golden bell and a pomegranate, a golden bell and a pomegranate, upon the skirts of the robe round about. And it shall be upon Aaron to minister. And the sound of it shall be heard when he goes in to the holy place before Jehovah, and when he comes out, that he does not die" (28:31-35).

The miter

"And thou shall make a plate of pure gold, and engrave upon it, like the engravings of a signet, HOLY TO JEHOVAH. And thou shall put it on a lace of blue, and it shall be upon the miter. It shall be upon the forefront of the miter. And it shall be upon Aaron's forehead. And Aaron shall bear the iniquity of the holy things, which the sons of Israel shall hallow in all their holy gifts. And it shall always be upon his forehead, that they may be accepted before Jehovah. And thou shall weave the tunic in checker work of fine linen. And thou shall make a miter of fine linen. And thou shall make a sash, the work of the embroiderer" (28:36-39).

Garments for the priest's sons

"And for Aaron's sons thou shall make tunics. And thou shall make for them sashes, and head-coverings thou shall make for them, for glory and for beauty. And thou shall put them upon Aaron thy brother, and upon his sons with him, and shall anoint them, and consecrate them, and sanctify them, that they may minister to me in the priest's office" (28:40-41).

Breeches

"And thou shall make for them linen breeches to cover the flesh of their nakedness, from the loins even to the thighs they shall reach. And they shall be upon Aaron, and upon his sons, when they go in to the tent of meeting, or when they come near to the altar to minister in the holy place, that they not bear iniquity, and die. It shall be a statute forever to him and to his seed after him" (28:42-43).

Laws for Consecrating the Priests

Anointing Aaron and his sons

"And this is the thing that thou shall do to them to hallow them, to minister to me in the priest's office: Take one young bullock and two rams without blemish, and unleavened bread, and cakes unleavened mingled with oil, and wafers unleavened anointed with oil, of fine wheaten flour shall thou make them, and thou shall put them into one basket, and bring them in the basket, with the bullock and the two rams. And Aaron and his sons thou shall bring to the door of the tent of meeting, and shall wash them with water. And thou shall take the garments, and put upon Aaron the tunic, and the robe of the ephod, and the ephod, and the breastplate, and gird him with the skillfully woven band of the ephod. And thou shall set the miter upon his head, and put the holy crown upon the miter. Then thou shall take the anointing oil, and pour it upon his head, and anoint him. And thou shall bring his sons, and put tunics upon them. And thou shall gird them with sashes, Aaron and his sons, and bind head-coverings on them. And they shall have the priesthood by a perpetual statute. And thou shall consecrate Aaron and his sons" (29:1-9).

A sin offering

"And thou shall bring the bullock before the tent of meeting. And Aaron and his sons shall lay their hands upon the head of the bullock, and thou shall kill the bullock before Jehovah, at the door of the tent of meeting. And thou shall take of the blood of the bullock, and put it upon the horns of the altar with thy finger, and thou shall pour out all the blood at the base of the altar. And thou shall take all the fat that covers the inwards, and the caul upon the liver, and the two kidneys, and the fat that is upon them, and burn them upon the altar. But the flesh of the bullock, and its skin, and it dung, thou shall burn with fire outside the camp. It is a sin offering" (29:10-14).

A burnt offering

"Thou shall also take the one ram, and Aaron and his sons shall lay their hands upon the head of the ram. And thou shall slay the ram, and thou shall take its blood, and sprinkle it round about upon the altar. And thou shall cut the ram into its pieces, and wash its inwards, and its legs, and put them with its pieces, and with its head, and thou shall burn the whole ram upon the altar. It is a burnt offering to Jehovah. It is a sweet savor, an offering made by fire to Jehovah" (29:15-18).

Anointing the priests

"And thou shall take the other ram, and Aaron and his sons shall lay their hands upon the head of the ram. Then thou shall kill the ram, and take of its blood, and put it upon the tip of the right ear of Aaron, and upon the tip of the right ear of his sons, and upon the thumb of their right hand, and upon the great toe of their right foot, and sprinkle the blood upon the altar round about. And thou shall take of the blood that is upon the altar, and of the anointing oil, and sprinkle it upon Aaron, and upon

his garments, and upon his sons, and upon the garments of his sons with him. And he shall be hallowed, and his garments, and his sons, and his sons' garments with him" (29:19-21).

The wave offering

"Also thou shall take from the ram the fat, and the fat tail, and the fat that covers the inwards, and the caul of the liver, and the two kidneys, and the fat that is upon them, and the right thigh (it is a ram of consecration), and one loaf of bread, and one cake of oiled bread, and one wafer, out of the basket of unleavened bread that is before Jehovah, and thou shall put the whole upon the hands of Aaron, and upon the hands of his sons, and shall wave them for a wave offering before Jehovah. And thou shall take them from their hands, and burn them on the altar upon the burnt offering, for a sweet savor before Jehovah. It is an offering made by fire to Jehovah" (29:22-25).

Moses' portion

"And thou shall take the breast of Aaron's ram of consecration, and wave it for a wave offering before Jehovah, and it shall be thy portion" (29:26).

The priest's portion

"And thou shall sanctify the breast of the wave offering, and the thigh of the heave offering, which is waved, and which is heaved up, of the ram of consecration, even of that which is for Aaron, and of that which is for his sons, and it shall be for Aaron and his sons as *their* portion forever from the sons of Israel, for it is a heave offering. And it shall be a heave offering from the sons of Israel of the sacrifices of their peace offerings, even their heave offering to Jehovah. And the holy garments of Aaron shall be for his sons after him, to be anointed in them, and to be consecrated in them. Seven days shall the son that is priest in his stead put them on, when he comes into the tent of meeting to minister in the holy place. And thou shall take the ram of consecration, and boil its flesh in a holy place. And Aaron and his sons shall eat the flesh of the ram, and the bread that is in the basket, at the door of the tent of meeting. And they shall eat those things with which atonement was made, to consecrate *and* to sanctify them, but a stranger shall not eat of it, because they are holy. And if any of the flesh of the consecration, or of the bread, remains to the morning, then thou shall burn the remainder with fire. It shall not be eaten, because it is holy" (29:27-34).

Seven days of consecration

"And thus thou shall do to Aaron, and to his sons, according to all that I have commanded thee. Seven days thou shall consecrate them. And every day thou shall offer the bullock of sin offering for atonement. And thou shall cleanse the altar when thou make atonement for it, and thou shall anoint it, to sanctify it. Seven days thou shall make atonement for the altar, and sanctify it. And the altar shall be most holy. Whatever touches the altar shall be holy" (29:35-37).

More About the Tabernacle

The daily offerings

"Now this is that which thou shall offer upon the altar: two lambs a year old day by day continually. The one lamb thou shall offer in the morning, and the other lamb thou shall offer at evening. And with the one lamb a tenth part *of an ephah* of fine flour mingled with the fourth part of a hin of beaten oil, and the fourth part of a hin of wine for a drink offering. And the other lamb thou shall offer at evening, and shall do thereto according to the meal offering of the morning, and according to the drink offering of it, for a sweet savor, an offering made by fire to Jehovah.

"It shall be a continual burnt offering throughout your generations at the door of the tent of meeting before Jehovah, where I will meet with you, to speak to thee there. And there I will meet with the sons of Israel, and *the tent* shall be sanctified by my glory. And I will sanctify the tent of meeting, and the altar. I will also sanctify Aaron and his sons to minister to me in the priest's office. And I will dwell among the sons of Israel, and will be their God. And they shall know that I am Jehovah their God, who brought them forth out of the land of Egypt, that I might dwell among them. I am Jehovah their God" (29:38-46).

The altar of incense

"And thou shall make an altar to burn incense upon. Thou shall make it of acacia wood. A cubit shall be the length of it, and a cubit the breadth of it (it shall be four-square), and two cubits shall be the height of it. The horns of it shall be of one piece with it. And thou shall overlay it with pure gold, the top of it, and the sides of it round about, and the horns of it. And thou shall make to it a crown of gold round about. And two golden rings thou shall make for it under the crown of it, upon the two ribs of it, upon the two sides of it thou shall make them. And they shall be for places for staves with which to bear it. And thou shall make the staves of acacia wood, and overlay them with gold.

"And thou shall put it before the veil that is by the ark of the testimony, before the mercy-seat that is over the testimony, where I will meet with thee. And Aaron shall burn in it incense of sweet spices. Every morning, when he dresses the lamps, he shall burn it. And when Aaron lights the lamps at evening, he shall burn it, a perpetual incense before Jehovah throughout your generations. Ye shall offer no strange incense on it, nor burnt offering, nor meal offering. And ye shall pour no drink offering on it. And Aaron shall make atonement upon the horns of it once in the year, with the blood of the sin offering of atonement. Once in the year he shall make atonement for it throughout your generations. It is most holy to Jehovah" (30:1-10).

(Taking a census)

For some reason this law about taking a census was added among all the laws about the tabernacle and the priests. Remember a subheading with parentheses is about a law not related to the main heading, but seems to be an aside. The text says, **"And Jehovah spoke**

to Moses, saying, When thou take the sum of the sons of Israel, according to those who are numbered of them, then they shall give every man a ransom for his soul to Jehovah when thou number them, that there be no plague among them when thou number them. This they shall give, everyone who passes over to those who are numbered: half a shekel after the shekel of the sanctuary, (the shekel is twenty gerahs,) half a shekel for an offering to Jehovah. Everyone who passes over to those who are numbered, from twenty years old and upward, shall give the offering of Jehovah. The rich shall not give more, and the poor shall not give less, than the half shekel, when they give the offering of Jehovah, to make atonement for your souls. And thou shall take the atonement money from the sons of Israel, and shall appoint it for the service of the tent of meeting, that it may be a memorial for the sons of Israel before Jehovah, to make atonement for your souls" (30:11-16).

The laver for the tabernacle

"And Jehovah spoke to Moses, saying, Thou shall also make a laver of brass, and the base of it of brass for washing. And thou shall put it between the tent of meeting and the altar, and thou shall put water in it. And Aaron and his sons shall wash their hands and their feet there. When they go into the tent of meeting, they shall wash with water, that they not die, or when they come near to the altar to minister, to burn an offering made by fire to Jehovah. So they shall wash their hands and their feet, that they not die. And it shall be a statute forever to them, even to him and to his seed throughout their generations" (30:17-21).

The anointing oil

"Moreover Jehovah spoke to Moses, saying, Take thou also to thee the chief spices: of flowing myrrh five hundred *shekels*, and of sweet cinnamon half so much, even two hundred and fifty, and of sweet calamus two hundred and fifty, and of cassia five hundred, after the shekel of the sanctuary, and of olive oil a hin. And thou shall make it a holy anointing oil, a perfume compounded after the art of the perfumer. It shall be a holy anointing oil. And thou shall anoint with it the tent of meeting, and the ark of the testimony, and the table and all the vessels of it, and the lampstand and the vessels of it, and the altar of incense, and the altar of burnt offering with all the vessels of it, and the laver and the base of it. And thou shall sanctify them, that they may be most holy. Whatever touches them shall be holy. And thou shall anoint Aaron and his sons, and sanctify them, that they may minister to me in the priest's office. And thou shall speak to the sons of Israel, saying, This shall be a holy anointing oil to me throughout your generations. Upon the flesh of man it shall not be poured, neither shall ye make any like it, according to the composition of it. It is holy, *and* it shall be holy to you. Whoever compounds any like it, or whoever puts any of it upon a stranger, he shall be cut off from his people" (30:22-33).

The incense

"And Jehovah said to Moses, Take to thee sweet spices, stacte, and onycha, and galbanum, sweet spices with pure frankincense, of each shall there be a like weight. And

thou shall make of it incense, a perfume after the art of the perfumer, seasoned with salt, pure *and* holy. And thou shall beat some of it very small, and put of it before the testimony in the tent of meeting, where I will meet with thee. It shall be to you most holy. And the incense which thou shall make, ye shall not make for yourselves according to the composition of it. It shall be to thee holy for Jehovah. Whoever shall make like that, to smell of it, he shall be cut off from his people" (30:34-38).

More About the Sabbath

"And Jehovah spoke to Moses, saying, Speak thou also to the sons of Israel, saying, Truly ye shall keep my sabbaths, for it is a sign between me and you throughout your generations, that ye may know that I am Jehovah who sanctifies you. Ye shall keep the sabbath therefore, for it is holy to you. Everyone who profanes it shall surely be put to death, for whoever does any work on it, that soul shall be cut off from among his people. Six days shall work be done, but on the seventh day is a sabbath of solemn rest, holy to Jehovah. Whoever does any work on the sabbath day, he shall surely be put to death. Therefore the sons of Israel shall keep the sabbath, to observe the sabbath throughout their generations, for a perpetual covenant. It is a sign between me and the sons of Israel forever. For in six days Jehovah made heaven and earth, and on the seventh day he rested, and was refreshed" (31:12-17).

More History

After all those instructions, Jehovah gave Moses the two tablets of the testimony (the ten commandments), which, the record says, were **"written with the finger of God"** (31:18). In the meantime the people had become impatient waiting for Moses, and they persuaded Aaron to make a golden calf for them to worship. When the people saw the idol they said, **"These are thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt"** (32:4). The record says they offered burnt offerings and peace offerings, ate and drank, and reveled before it.

God was, of course, thoroughly disgusted about it, and he threatened to consume them. Moses pleaded for the people, so God withheld his wrath. When Moses went down from the mount and saw what they were doing he became so angry he threw the stone tablets down and broke them. He ground the idol into powder, scattered it upon the water, and made the people drink it. After that he asked who was on Jehovah's side, and the sons of Levi rallied to him. He commanded them to begin killing their fellow Israelites, and the record says 3000 men were slain.

After that Jehovah commanded Moses to come up on the mountain, and bring two tablets of stone like the first, which he would again write upon. When Moses went up he again pleaded to Jehovah for the people. And God said to him, **"Behold, I make a covenant. Before all thy people I will do marvels, such as have not been wrought in all the earth, nor in any nation, and all the people among which thou are shall see the work of Jehovah, for it is an awesome thing that I do with thee"** (34:10). Jehovah again warned about the

inhabitants and the gods in the promised land. Those gods were a continuous alluring temptation to the people, to which they succumbed many times.

Jehovah said to Moses, **"Observe thou that which I command thee this day. Behold, I drive out before thee the Amorite, and the Canaanite, and the Hittite, and the Perizzite, and the Hivite, and the Jebusite. Take heed to thyself, lest thou make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land where thou go, lest it be for a snare in the midst of thee. But ye shall break down their altars, and dash in pieces their pillars, and ye shall cut down their Asherim, for thou shall worship no other god. For Jehovah, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God. Lest thou make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land, and they play the harlot after their gods, and sacrifice to their gods, and *a man* calls thee and thou eat of his sacrifice, and thou take of their daughters to thy sons, and their daughters play the harlot after their gods, and make thy sons play the harlot after their gods. Thou shall make thee no molten gods"** (34:11-17).

Some Laws Repeated

The feast of unleavened bread

"Thou shall keep the feast of unleavened bread. Seven days thou shall eat unleavened bread, as I commanded thee, at the time appointed in the month Abib, for in the month Abib thou came out from Egypt" (34:18).

The firstborn

"All that opens the womb is mine, and all thy cattle that is male, the firstlings of cow and sheep. And the firstling of a donkey thou shall redeem with a lamb, and if thou will not redeem it, then thou shall break its neck. All the firstborn of thy sons thou shall redeem. And none shall appear before me empty" (34:19-20).

The sabbath and the annual feasts

"Six days thou shall work, but on the seventh day thou shall rest; in plowing time and in harvest thou shall rest. And thou shall observe the feast of weeks, *even* of the first-fruits of wheat harvest, and the feast of ingathering in the middle of the year. Three times in the year all thy males shall appear before the lord Jehovah, the God of Israel. For I will cast out nations before thee, and enlarge thy borders. Neither shall any man desire thy land, when thou go up to appear before Jehovah thy God three times in the year. Thou shall not offer the blood of my sacrifice with leavened bread, nor shall the sacrifice of the feast of the Passover be left to the morning" (34:21-25).

The first-fruits

"The first of the first-fruits of thy ground thou shall bring to the house of Jehovah thy God" (34:26).

Boiling a kid

"Thou shall not boil a kid in its mother's milk" (34:26).

Some History

The book says Moses was on the mountain forty days and forty nights, and he neither ate nor drank. Not drinking anything for that long a time is normally impossible. One interesting effect of Moses not eating or drinking meant the absence of a need to eliminate his body waste. Since he was with God, and he was no doubt on holy ground, that would have kept the area free from any kind of uncleanness.

Afterward Moses returned to the camp with the two tablets of the testimony, upon which were written the words of the ten commandments. He gave the sons of Israel all the commandments Jehovah had spoken to him on mount Sinai. And he again spoke of the sabbath.

More About the Sabbath

"Six days work shall be done, but on the seventh day there shall be to you a holy day, a sabbath of solemn rest to Jehovah. Whoever does any work in it shall be put to death. Ye shall kindle no fire throughout your habitations upon the sabbath day" (35:2-3).

Building the Tabernacle

Moses told the people about the tabernacle, and he asked for offerings of precious metals, fabrics, skins, and other materials needed for it. The record says they offered freely, so much that the workmen later said they were giving too much. However, that did not indicate a stronger commitment to God, because many times after that they rebelled against him.

The text then describes in detail the construction and assembly of the tabernacle and everything with it. After it was finished Moses was commanded to anoint and sanctify the tabernacle, the altar, and Aaron and his sons for the priesthood.

Ten days before they departed Egypt, God had given them a new calendar system. The book says the tabernacle was raised the first day of their second year of that calendar. It also says the glory of Jehovah filled the tabernacle with a cloud. And it says the cloud guided them throughout their wilderness travels. Thus ends the book of Exodus.

Part 1:3

LAW IN LEVITICUS

Leviticus is almost completely a book of laws. There is very little history in it. Many of the laws are about offerings, and that is how it begins.

BURNT OFFERINGS

Of the herd

"And Jehovah called to Moses, and spoke to him out of the tent of meeting, saying, Speak to the sons of Israel, and say to them, When any man of you offers an oblation to Jehovah, ye shall offer your oblation of the cattle, *even* of the herd and of the flock. If his oblation be a burnt offering of the herd, he shall offer it a male without blemish. He shall offer it at the door of the tent of meeting, that he may be accepted before Jehovah.

"And he shall lay his hand upon the head of the burnt offering, and it shall be accepted for him to make atonement for him. And he shall kill the bullock before Jehovah, and Aaron's sons, the priests, shall present the blood, and sprinkle the blood round about upon the altar that is at the door of the tent of meeting. And he shall skin the burnt offering, and cut it into its pieces.

"And the sons of Aaron the priest shall put fire upon the altar, and lay wood in order upon the fire. And Aaron's sons, the priests, shall lay the pieces, the head, and the fat, in order upon the wood that is on the fire which is upon the altar, but its innards and its legs he shall wash with water. And the priest shall burn the whole on the altar, for a burnt offering, an offering made by fire, of a sweet savor to Jehovah" (1:1-9).

Of the flock

"And if his oblation be of the flock, of the sheep, or of the goats, for a burnt offering, he shall offer it a male without blemish. And he shall kill it on the side of the altar northward before Jehovah, and Aaron's sons, the priests, shall sprinkle its blood upon the altar round about. And he shall cut it into its pieces, with its head and its fat, and the priest shall lay them in order on the wood that is on the fire which is upon the altar, but the innards and the legs he shall wash with water. And the priest shall offer the whole, and burn it upon the altar. It is a burnt offering, an offering made by fire, of a sweet savor to Jehovah" (1:10-13).

Of the birds

"And if his oblation to Jehovah be a burnt offering of birds, then he shall offer his oblation of turtle-doves, or of young pigeons. And the priest shall bring it to the altar, and wring off its head, and burn it on the altar. And the blood of it shall be drained out on the side of the altar. And he shall take away its crop with the filth of

it, and cast it beside the altar on the east part, in the place of the ashes. And he shall rend it by the wings of it, *but* shall not divide it apart, and the priest shall burn it upon the altar, upon the wood that is upon the fire. It is a burnt offering, an offering made by fire, of a sweet savor to Jehovah" (1:14-17).

Meal Offerings

Of fine flour

"And when anyone offers an oblation of a meal offering to Jehovah, his oblation shall be of fine flour, and he shall pour oil upon it, and put frankincense on it. And he shall bring it to Aaron's sons the priests, and he shall take out of it his handful of the fine flour of it, and of the oil of it, with all the frankincense of it. And the priest shall burn the memorial of it upon the altar, an offering made by fire, of a sweet savor to Jehovah. And that which is left of the meal offering shall be Aaron's and his sons'. It is a thing most holy of the offerings of Jehovah made by fire" (2:1-3).

Baked in the oven

"And when thou offer an oblation of a meal offering baked in the oven, it shall be unleavened cakes of fine flour mingled with oil, or unleavened wafers anointed with oil" (2:4).

Of the baking-pan

"And if thy oblation be a meal offering of the baking-pan, it shall be of fine flour unleavened, mingled with oil. Thou shall part it in pieces, and pour oil in it. It is a meal offering" (2:5-6).

Of the frying-pan

"And if thy oblation be a meal offering of the frying-pan, it shall be made of fine flour with oil" (2:7).

How to offer them

"And thou shall bring the meal offering that is made of these things to Jehovah, and it shall be presented to the priest, and he shall bring it to the altar. And the priest shall take up from the meal offering the memorial of it, and shall burn it upon the altar, an offering made by fire, of a sweet savor to Jehovah. And that which is left of the meal offering shall be Aaron's and his sons'. It is a thing most holy of the offerings of Jehovah made by fire" (2:8-10).

What to add or not add

"No meal offering, which ye shall offer to Jehovah, shall be made with leaven, for ye shall burn no leaven, nor any honey, as an offering made by fire to Jehovah. As an oblation of first-*fruits* ye shall offer them to Jehovah, but they shall not come up for a sweet savor on the altar. And every oblation of thy meal offering thou shall season with salt, nor shall thou allow the salt of the covenant of thy God to be lacking from thy meal offering. With all thine oblations thou shall offer salt" (2:11-13).

Of first-fruits

"And if thou offer a meal offering of first-fruits to Jehovah, thou shall offer for the meal offering of thy first-fruits grain in the ear parched with fire, crushed grain of the fresh ear. And thou shall put oil upon it, and lay frankincense on it. It is a meal offering. And the priest shall burn the memorial of it, part of the crushed grain of it, and part of the oil of it, with all the frankincense of it. It is an offering made by fire to Jehovah" (2:14-16).

Peace Offerings

Of the herd

"And if his oblation be a sacrifice of peace offerings, if he offer of the herd, whether male or female, he shall offer it without blemish before Jehovah. And he shall lay his hand upon the head of his oblation, and kill it at the door of the tent of meeting. And Aaron's sons the priests shall sprinkle the blood upon the altar round about. And he shall offer of the sacrifice of peace offerings an offering made by fire to Jehovah, he shall take away the fat that covers the innards, and all the fat that is upon the innards, and the two kidneys, and the fat that is on them, which is by the loins, and the caul upon the liver, with the kidneys. And Aaron's sons shall burn it on the altar upon the burnt offering, which is upon the wood that is on the fire. It is an offering made by fire, of a sweet savor to Jehovah" (3:1-5).

Of the flock

"And if his oblation for a sacrifice of peace offerings to Jehovah be of the flock, male or female, he shall offer it without blemish" (3:6).

A lamb

"If he offers a lamb for his oblation, then he shall offer it before Jehovah. And he shall lay his hand upon the head of his oblation, and kill it before the tent of meeting. And Aaron's sons shall sprinkle the blood of it upon the altar round about. And he shall offer of the sacrifice of peace offerings an offering made by fire to Jehovah. The fat of it, the entire fat tail, he shall take away close by the backbone. And he shall take away the fat that covers the innards, and all the fat that is upon the innards, and the two kidneys, and the fat that is upon them, which is by the loins, and the caul upon the liver, with the kidneys. And the priest shall burn it upon the altar. It is the food of the offering made by fire to Jehovah" (3:7-11).

A goat

"And if his oblation be a goat, then he shall offer it before Jehovah. And he shall lay his hand upon the head of it, and kill it before the tent of meeting. And the sons of Aaron shall sprinkle the blood of it upon the altar round about. And he shall offer his oblation from it, *even* an offering made by fire to Jehovah. He shall take away the fat that covers the innards, and all the fat that is upon the innards, and the two kidneys, and the fat that is upon them, which is by the loins, and the

caul upon the liver, with the kidneys. And the priest shall burn them upon the altar. It is the food of the offering made by fire, for a sweet savor" (3:12-16).

Eat no fat or blood

"All the fat is Jehovah's. It shall be a perpetual statute throughout your generations in all your dwellings, that ye shall eat neither fat nor blood" (3:17).

Sin Offerings

Guilt on the people by the priest

"And Jehovah spoke to Moses, saying, Speak to the sons of Israel, saying, If a soul shall sin unwittingly, in any of the things which Jehovah has commanded not to be done, and shall do any one of them, if the anointed priest shall sin so as to bring guilt on the people, then let him offer for his sin, which he has sinned, a young bullock without blemish to Jehovah for a sin offering. And he shall bring the bullock to the door of the tent of meeting before Jehovah. And he shall lay his hand upon the head of the bullock, and kill the bullock before Jehovah.

"And the anointed priest shall take of the blood of the bullock, and bring it to the tent of meeting. And the priest shall dip his finger in the blood, and sprinkle of the blood seven times before Jehovah, before the veil of the sanctuary. And the priest shall put of the blood upon the horns of the altar of sweet incense before Jehovah, which is in the tent of meeting, and all the blood of the bullock he shall pour out at the base of the altar of burnt offering, which is at the door of the tent of meeting.

"And all the fat of the bullock of the sin offering he shall take off from it. The fat that covers the innards, and all the fat that is upon the innards, and the two kidneys, and the fat that is upon them, which is by the loins, and the caul upon the liver, with the kidneys, he shall take away, as it is taken off from the ox of the sacrifice of peace offerings. And the priest shall burn them upon the altar of burnt offering.

"And the skin of the bullock, and all its flesh, with its head, and with its legs, and its innards, and its dung, even the whole bullock he shall carry forth outside the camp to a clean place, where the ashes are poured out, and burn it on wood with fire. It shall be burnt where the ashes are poured out" (4:1-12).

Sin of the congregation

"And if the whole congregation of Israel err, and the thing be hid from the eyes of the assembly, and they have done any of the things which Jehovah has commanded not to be done, and are guilty, when the sin by which they have sinned is known, then the assembly shall offer a young bullock for a sin offering, and bring it before the tent of meeting. "And the elders of the congregation shall lay their hands upon the head of the bullock before Jehovah, and the bullock shall be killed before Jehovah.

"And the anointed priest shall bring of the blood of the bullock to the tent of meeting. And the priest shall dip his finger in the blood, and sprinkle it seven times before Je-

hovah, before the veil. And he shall put of the blood upon the horns of the altar which is before Jehovah, that is in the tent of meeting, and all the blood he shall pour out at the base of the altar of burnt offering, which is at the door of the tent of meeting. And all the fat of it he shall take off from it, and burn it upon the altar.

"Thus he shall do with the bullock, as he did with the bullock of the sin offering, so he shall do with this. And the priest shall make atonement for them, and they shall be forgiven. And he shall carry forth the bullock outside the camp, and burn it as he burned the first bullock. It is the sin offering for the assembly" (4:13-21).

Sin of a ruler

"When a ruler sins, and does unwittingly any one of all the things which Jehovah his God has commanded not to be done, and is guilty, if his sin, by which he has sinned, be made known to him, he shall bring for his oblation a goat, a male without blemish. And he shall lay his hand upon the head of the goat, and kill it in the place where they kill the burnt offering before Jehovah. It is a sin offering.

"And the priest shall take of the blood of the sin offering with his finger, and put it upon the horns of the altar of burnt offering, and the blood of it he shall pour out at the base of the altar of burnt offering. And all the fat of it he shall burn upon the altar, as the fat of the sacrifice of peace offerings. And the priest shall make atonement for him as concerning his sin, and he shall be forgiven" (4:22-26).

Sin of the common people

A female goat

"And if any soul of the common people sin unwittingly, in doing any of the things which Jehovah has commanded not to be done, and be guilty, if his sin, which he has sinned, be made known to him, then he shall bring for his oblation a goat, a female without blemish, for his sin which he has sinned. And he shall lay his hand upon the head of the sin offering, and kill the sin offering in the place of burnt offering.

"And the priest shall take of the blood of it with his finger, and put it upon the horns of the altar of burnt offering, and all the blood of it he shall pour out at the base of the altar. And all the fat of it he shall take away, as the fat is taken away from off the sacrifice of peace offerings, and the priest shall burn it upon the altar for a sweet savor to Jehovah. And the priest shall make atonement for him, and he shall be forgiven" (4:27-31).

Or a female lamb

"And if he brings a lamb as his oblation for a sin offering, he shall bring it a female without blemish. And he shall lay his hand upon the head of the sin offering, and kill it for a sin offering in the place where they kill the burnt offering.

"And the priest shall take of the blood of the sin offering with his finger, and put it upon the horns of the altar of burnt offering, and all the blood of it he shall pour

out at the base of the altar. And all the fat of it he shall take away, as the fat of the lamb is taken away from the sacrifice of peace offerings, and the priest shall burn them on the altar, upon the offerings of Jehovah made by fire. And the priest shall make atonement for him concerning his sin that he has sinned, and he shall be forgiven" (4:32-35).

Trespass Offerings

Various sins

"And if a soul sins, in that he hears the voice of an oath, he being a witness, whether he has seen or known, if he does not testify, then he shall bear his iniquity. Or if a soul touches any unclean thing, whether it be the carcass of an unclean beast, or the carcass of unclean cattle, or the carcass of unclean creeping things, and it be hidden from him, and he be unclean, then he shall be guilty. Or if he touch the uncleanness of man, whatever his uncleanness be with which he is unclean, and it be hid from him, when he knows of it, then he shall be guilty. Or if a soul swears rashly with his lips to do evil, or to do good, whatever it be that a man shall utter rashly with an oath, and it be hid from him, when he realizes it, then he shall be guilty in one of these" (5:1-5).

A female lamb or goat

"And it shall be, when he shall be guilty in one of these, that he shall confess that by which he has sinned. And he shall bring his trespass offering to Jehovah for his sin which he has sinned, a female from the flock, a lamb or a goat, for a sin offering. And the priest shall make atonement for him as concerning his sin" (5:5-6).

Or two birds

"And if his means is not sufficient for a lamb, then he shall bring his trespass offering for that by which he has sinned, two turtle-doves, or two young pigeons, to Jehovah, one for a sin offering, and the other for a burnt offering. And he shall bring them to the priest, who shall offer that which is for the sin offering first, and wring off its head from its neck, but shall not divide it apart. And he shall sprinkle of the blood of the sin offering upon the side of the altar, and the rest of the blood shall be drained out at the base of the altar. It is a sin offering. And he shall offer the second for a burnt offering, according to the ordinance. And the priest shall make atonement for him as concerning his sin which he has sinned, and he shall be forgiven" (5:7-10).

Or fine flour

"But if his means is not sufficient for two turtle-doves, or two young pigeons, then he shall bring his oblation for that by which he has sinned, the tenth part of an ephah of fine flour for a sin offering. He shall put no oil upon it, nor shall he put any frankincense on it, for it is a sin offering. And he shall bring it to the priest, and the priest shall take his handful of it as the memorial of it, and burn it on the

altar, upon the offerings of Jehovah made by fire. It is a sin offering. And the priest shall make atonement for him concerning his sin that he has sinned in any of these things, and he shall be forgiven. And *the remnant* shall be the priest's, as the meal offering" (5:11-14).

Sins against the holy things of Jehovah

"And Jehovah spoke to Moses, saying, If a soul commits a trespass, and sins unwittingly in the holy things of Jehovah, then he shall bring his trespass offering to Jehovah, a ram without blemish out of the flock, according to thy estimation in silver by shekels, after the shekel of the sanctuary, for a trespass offering. And he shall make restitution for that which he has done amiss in the holy thing, and shall add the fifth part to it, and give it to the priest. And the priest shall make atonement for him with the ram of the trespass offering, and he shall be forgiven" (5:14-16).

Unwitting sin about anything forbidden

"And if a soul sins, and does any of the things which Jehovah has commanded not to be done, though he did not know it, yet he is guilty, and shall bear his iniquity. And he shall bring a ram without blemish out of the flock, according to thy estimation, for a trespass offering, to the priest. And the priest shall make atonement for him concerning the thing by which he erred unwittingly and knew it not, and he shall be forgiven. It is a trespass offering. He is certainly guilty before Jehovah" (5:17-19).

Sins against neighbors

"And Jehovah spoke to Moses, saying, If a soul sins, and commits a trespass against Jehovah, and deals falsely with his neighbor in a matter of deposit, or of bargain, or of robbery, or have oppressed his neighbor, or has found that which was lost, and deal falsely by it, and swears to a lie, in any of all these things that a man does, sinning by it, then it shall be, if he has sinned, and is guilty, that he shall restore that which he took by robbery, or the thing which he has gotten by oppression, or the deposit which was committed to him, or the lost thing which he found, or anything about which he has sworn falsely, he shall even restore it in full, and shall add the fifth part more to it. He shall give it to him to whom it pertains, in the day of his being found guilty.

"And he shall bring his trespass offering to Jehovah, a ram without blemish out of the flock, according to thy estimation, for a trespass offering, to the priest. And the priest shall make atonement for him before Jehovah, and he shall be forgiven concerning whatever he does so as to be guilty by it" (6:1-7).

More About Offerings

The burnt offering

"And Jehovah spoke to Moses, saying, Command Aaron and his sons, saying, This is the law of the burnt offering: The burnt offering shall be on the hearth upon the altar all night to the morning, and the fire of the altar shall be kept burning on it. And

the priest shall put on his linen garment, and he shall put his linen breeches upon his flesh, and he shall take up the ashes of the fire which has consumed the burnt offering on the altar, and he shall put them beside the altar. And he shall put off his garments, and put on other garments, and carry forth the ashes outside the camp to a clean place.

"And the fire upon the altar shall be kept burning on it; it shall not go out. And the priest shall burn wood on it every morning, and he shall lay the burnt offering in order upon it, and shall burn the fat of the peace offerings on it. Fire shall be kept burning upon the altar continually; it shall not go out" (6:8-13).

The meal offering

"And this is the law of the meal offering: The sons of Aaron shall offer it before Jehovah, before the altar. And he shall take up his handful from it, of the fine flour of the meal offering, and of the oil of it, and all the frankincense which is upon the meal offering, and shall burn it upon the altar for a sweet savor, as the memorial of it, to Jehovah.

"And that which is left of it Aaron and his sons shall eat. It shall be eaten without leaven in a holy place. They shall eat it in the court of the tent of meeting. It shall not be baked with leaven. I have given it as their portion of my offerings made by fire, it is most holy, as the sin offering, and as the trespass offering. Every male among the sons of Aaron shall eat of it, as a portion forever throughout your generations, from the offerings of Jehovah made by fire. Whoever touches them shall be holy" (6:14-18).

When the high priest is anointed

"And Jehovah spoke to Moses, saying, This is the oblation of Aaron and of his sons, which they shall offer to Jehovah in the day when he is anointed: the tenth part of an ephah of fine flour for a meal offering perpetually, half of it in the morning, and half of it in the evening. It shall be made with oil on a baking-pan. Thou shall bring it in when it is soaked. Thou shall offer the meal offering in baked pieces for a sweet savor to Jehovah. And the anointed priest who shall be in his stead from among his sons shall offer it. It shall be wholly burnt to Jehovah by a statute forever. And every meal offering of the priest shall be wholly burnt; it shall not be eaten" (6:19-23).

The sin offering

"And Jehovah spoke to Moses, saying, Speak to Aaron and to his sons, saying, This is the law of the sin offering: In the place where the burnt offering is killed the sin offering shall be killed before Jehovah. It is most holy. The priest who offers it for sin shall eat it. It shall be eaten in a holy place, in the court of the tent of meeting. Whatever shall touch the flesh of it shall be holy.

"And when there is of the blood sprinkled upon any garment, thou shall wash that on which it was sprinkled in a holy place. But the earthen vessel in which it is boiled

shall be broken, and if it be boiled in a brazen vessel, it shall be scoured, and rinsed in water.

"Every male among the priests shall eat of it. It is most holy. And no sin offering, from which any of the blood is brought into the tent of meeting to make atonement in the holy place, shall be eaten; it shall be burnt with fire" (6:24-30).

The trespass offering

"And this is the law of the trespass offering. It is most holy. In the place where they kill the burnt offering they shall kill the trespass offering, and the blood of it he shall sprinkle upon the altar round about. And he shall offer from it all the fat of it. He shall take away the fat tail, and the fat that covers the innards, and the two kidneys, and the fat that is on them, which is by the loins, and the caul upon the liver, with the kidneys. And the priest shall burn them upon the altar for an offering made by fire to Jehovah. It is a trespass offering. Every male among the priests shall eat of it. It shall be eaten in a holy place; it is most holy. As is the sin offering, so is the trespass offering, there is one law for them. The priest who makes atonement with it, he shall have it" (7:1-7).

The burnt offering and the meal offering

"And the priest who offers any man's burnt offering, even the priest shall have to himself the skin of the burnt offering which he has offered. And every meal offering that is baked in the oven, and all that is dressed in the frying-pan, and on the baking-pan, shall be the priest's who offers it. And every meal offering, mingled with oil, or dry, all the sons of Aaron shall have, one as well as another" (7:8-10).

The peace offering

"And this is the law of the sacrifice of peace offerings, which he shall offer to Jehovah. If he offers it for a thanksgiving, then he shall offer with the sacrifice of thanksgiving unleavened cakes mingled with oil, and unleavened wafers anointed with oil, and cakes mingled with oil, of fine flour soaked. He shall offer his oblation with the sacrifice of his peace offerings for thanksgiving with cakes of leavened bread. And from it he shall offer one out of each oblation for a heave offering to Jehovah. It shall be the priest's who sprinkles the blood of the peace offerings" (7:11-14).

When to eat it

"And the flesh of the sacrifice of his peace offerings for thanksgiving shall be eaten on the day of his oblation; he shall not leave any of it until the morning. But if the sacrifice of his oblation be a vow, or a freewill offering, it shall be eaten on the day that he offers his sacrifice, and on the morrow that which remains of it shall be eaten, but that which remains of the flesh of the sacrifice on the third day shall be burnt with fire. And if any of the flesh of the sacrifice of his peace offerings is eaten on the third day, it shall not be accepted, nor shall it be imputed to him who offers it. It shall be an abomination, and the soul that eats of it shall bear his iniquity" (7:15-18).

When not to eat

"And the flesh that touches any unclean thing shall not be eaten; it shall be burnt with fire. And as for the flesh, every clean man shall eat of it, but the soul that eats of the flesh of the sacrifice of peace offerings, that pertain to Jehovah, having his uncleanness upon him, that soul shall be cut off from his people. And when a soul shall touch any unclean thing, the uncleanness of man, or an unclean beast, or any unclean abomination, and eats of the flesh of the sacrifice of peace offerings, which pertain to Jehovah, that soul shall be cut off from his people" (7:19-21).

(Eating fat or blood)

"And Jehovah spoke to Moses, saying, Speak to the sons of Israel, saying, Ye shall eat no fat, of ox, or sheep, or goat. And the fat of that which dies of itself, and the fat of that which is torn of beasts, may be used for any other service, but ye shall certainly not eat of it. For whoever eats the fat of the beast, of which men offer an offering made by fire to Jehovah, even the soul that eats it shall be cut off from his people. And ye shall eat no manner of blood, whether it be of bird or of beast, in any of your dwellings. Whoever it is who eats any blood, that soul shall be cut off from his people" (7:22-27). Remember a subheading with parentheses is about a law not related to the main heading, but seems to be an aside.

The priest's portion

"And Jehovah spoke to Moses, saying, Speak to the sons of Israel, saying, He who offers the sacrifice of his peace offerings to Jehovah shall bring his oblation to Jehovah out of the sacrifice of his peace offerings. His own hands shall bring the offerings of Jehovah made by fire. He shall bring the fat with the breast, that the breast may be waved for a wave offering before Jehovah. And the priest shall burn the fat upon the altar, but the breast shall be Aaron's and his sons'. And the right thigh ye shall give to the priest for a heave offering out of the sacrifices of your peace offerings. He among the sons of Aaron who offers the blood of the peace offerings, and the fat, shall have the right thigh for a portion. For I have taken the wave-breast and the heave-thigh from the sons of Israel out of the sacrifices of their peace offerings, and have given them to Aaron the priest and to his sons as a portion forever from the sons of Israel.

"This is the anointing-portion of Aaron, and the anointing-portion of his sons, out of the offerings of Jehovah made by fire, in the day when he presented them to minister to Jehovah in the priest's office, which Jehovah commanded to be given them from the sons of Israel, in the day that he anointed them. It is a portion forever throughout their generations" (7:28-36).

That passage speaks of the priest's portion from the peace offerings. However, the priests were also to receive portions from meal, sin, and trespass offerings.

A Summary

The text of Leviticus concludes that long section of laws about various offerings with this summary: **"This is the law of the burnt offering, of the meal offering, and of the sin offering, and of the trespass offering, and of the consecration, and of the sacrifice of peace offerings, which Jehovah commanded Moses at mount Sinai, in the day that he commanded the sons of Israel to offer their oblations to Jehovah, in the wilderness of Sinai"** (7:37-38).

Some History

The book next describes the dedication of Aaron and his sons. The record of God's commands about the dedication was given in Exodus (29 and 40). In this book Moses commanded a sacrifice on the eighth day that was not mentioned in Exodus. Moses himself may have made all the offerings during the seven days of Aaron's consecration, and this eighth day was apparently the beginning of Aaron' service. With the exception of Moses only the high priests were allowed to burn offerings on the altar. After Aaron made all the offerings Moses and Aaron went into the tent of meeting (the tabernacle), and when they came out they blessed the people. Then the glory of Jehovah appeared (not Jehovah himself), and fire came forth from him which devoured the burnt offering on the altar. The text says, **"And when all the people saw it, they shouted, and fell on their faces"** (9:24). Not long afterward the two elder sons of Aaron offered strange fire before Jehovah, which provoked him to bring forth fire to consume them. Moses said to Aaron, **"This is it that Jehovah spoke, saying, I will be sanctified in those who come near me. And I will be glorified before all the people"** (10:3). What they did must have been irreverent, and God would not tolerate it from sons of the high priest.

Laws About Eating

The priests and alcoholic drinks

"And Jehovah spoke to Aaron, saying, Drink no wine nor strong drink, thou, nor thy sons with thee, when ye go into the tent of meeting, that ye not die—it shall be a statute forever throughout your generations—and that ye may make a distinction between the holy and the common, and between the unclean and the clean, and that ye may teach the sons of Israel all the statutes which Jehovah has spoken to them by Moses" (10:8-11).

Beasts on the earth

"And Jehovah spoke to Moses and to Aaron, saying to them, Speak to the sons of Israel, saying, These are the living things which ye may eat among all the beasts that are on the earth. Whatever parts the hoof, and is cloven footed, *and* chews the cud, among the beasts, that may ye eat.

"Nevertheless these shall ye not eat of those that chew the cud, or of those that part the hoof: the camel, because he chews the cud but does not part the hoof, he is un-

clean to you. And the coney, because he chews the cud but does not part the hoof, he is unclean to you. And the hare, because she chews the cud but does not part the hoof, she is unclean to you. And the swine, because he parts the hoof, and is cloven footed, but does not chew the cud, he is unclean to you. Of their flesh ye shall not eat, and their carcasses ye shall not touch, they are unclean to you" (11:1-8).

Creatures in the waters

"These may ye eat of all that are in the waters: whatever has fins and scales in the waters, in the seas, and in the rivers, that may ye eat. And all that have no fins and scales in the seas, and in the rivers, of all that move in the waters, and of all the living creatures that are in the waters, they are an abomination to you, and they shall be an abomination to you. Ye shall not eat of their flesh, and their carcasses ye shall have in abomination. Whatever has no fins nor scales in the waters, that is an abomination to you" (11:9-12).

Birds

"And these ye shall have in abomination among the birds, they shall not be eaten, they are an abomination: the eagle, and the vulture, and the osprey, and the kite, and the falcon after its kind, every raven after its kind, and the ostrich, and the night-hawk, and the sea-gull, and the hawk after its kind, and the little owl, and the cormorant, and the great owl, and the horned owl, and the pelican, and the carrion vulture, and the stork, the heron after its kind, and the hoopoe, and the bat. All winged creeping things that go upon all fours are an abomination to you" (11:13-20).

Winged creeping things

"Yet these ye may eat of all winged creeping things that go upon all fours, which have legs above their feet, with which to leap upon the earth, even these of them ye may eat: the locust after its kind, and the bald locust after its kind, and the cricket after its kind, and the grasshopper after its kind. But all winged creeping things, which have four feet, are an abomination to you, and by these ye shall become unclean. Whoever touches the carcass of them shall be unclean until the evening. And whoever bears *any* of the carcass of them shall wash his clothes, and be unclean until the evening" (11:21-25).

The hoof and the cud

"Every beast which parts the hoof, and is not cloven footed, nor chews the cud, is unclean to you. Everyone who touches them shall be unclean. And whatever goes upon its paws, among all beasts that go on all fours, they are unclean to you. Whoever touches their carcass shall be unclean until the evening. And he who bears the carcass of them shall wash his clothes, and be unclean until the evening; they are unclean to you" (11:26-28).

Creeping things

"And these are those which are unclean to you among the creeping things that creep upon the earth: the weasel, and the mouse, and the great lizard after its kind, and the gecko, and the land-crocodile, and the lizard, and the sand-lizard, and the chameleon. These are those which are unclean to you among all that creep. Whoever touches them, when they are dead, shall be unclean until the evening.

"And upon whatever any of them falls when they are dead, it shall be unclean, whether it be any vessel of wood, or raiment, or skin, or sack. Whatever vessel it be, with which any work is done, it must be put into water, and it shall be unclean until the evening, then it shall be clean. And every earthen vessel, into which any of them falls, whatever is in it shall be unclean, and ye shall break it.

"All food *therein* which may be eaten, that on which water comes, shall be unclean, and all drink that may be drunk in every *such* vessel shall be unclean. And everything upon which *any part* of their carcass falls shall be unclean, whether oven, or range for pots, it shall be broken in pieces; they are unclean, and shall be unclean to you.

"Nevertheless a fountain or a pit in which is a gathering of water shall be clean, but that which touches their carcass shall be unclean. And if *any* of their carcass falls upon any sowing seed which is to be sown, it is clean. But if water is put upon the seed, and *any* of their carcass falls in it, it is unclean to you" (11:29-38).

Any beast that dies

"And if any beast, of which ye may eat, dies, he who touches the carcass of it shall be unclean until the evening. And he who eats of the carcass of it shall wash his clothes, and be unclean until the evening. He also who bears the carcass of it shall wash his clothes, and be unclean until the evening" (11:39-40). That law obviously applied to edible animals that die of themselves, and are not killed for eating.

Things that crawl

"And every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth is an abomination; it shall not be eaten. Whatever goes upon the belly, and whatever goes upon all fours, or whatever has many feet, even all creeping things that creep upon the earth, them ye shall not eat, for they are an abomination. Ye shall not make yourselves abominable with any creeping thing that creeps, nor shall ye make yourselves unclean with them, that ye should be defiled by it.

"For I am Jehovah your God. Sanctify yourselves therefore, and become ye holy, since I am holy. Neither shall ye defile yourselves with any manner of creeping thing that moves upon the earth. For I am Jehovah who brought you up out of the land of Egypt, to be your God. Ye shall therefore be holy, for I am holy" (11:41-45).

Conclusion

"This is the law of the beast, and of the bird, and of every living creature that moves in the waters, and of every creature that creeps upon the earth, to make a distinction between the unclean and the clean, and between the living thing that may be eaten and the living thing that may not be eaten" (11:46-47).

Purification After Childbirth

"And Jehovah spoke to Moses, saying, Speak to the sons of Israel, saying, If a woman conceives seed, and bears a man-child, then she shall be unclean seven days, as in the days of the impurity of her sickness she shall be unclean. And in the eighth day the flesh of his foreskin shall be circumcised. And she shall continue in the blood of *her* purifying thirty-three days. She shall touch no hallowed thing, nor come into the sanctuary, until the days of her purifying be fulfilled. But if she bears a maid-child, then she shall be unclean two weeks, as in her impurity, and she shall continue in the blood of *her* purifying sixty-six days.

"And when the days of her purifying are fulfilled, for a son, or for a daughter, she shall bring a lamb a year old for a burnt offering, and a young pigeon, or a turtle-dove, for a sin offering, to the door of the tent of meeting, to the priest. And he shall offer it before Jehovah, and make atonement for her, and she shall be cleansed from the fountain of her blood. This is the law for her who bears, whether a male or a female.

"And if her means are not sufficient for a lamb, then she shall take two turtle-doves, or two young pigeons, the one for a burnt offering, and the other for a sin offering. And the priest shall make atonement for her, and she shall be clean" (12:1-8).

Skin Disorders

A rising, scab, or bright spot

Deeper than the skin

"And Jehovah spoke to Moses and to Aaron, saying, When a man shall have in the skin of his flesh a rising, or a scab, or a bright spot, and it becomes in the skin of his flesh a leprous disease, then he shall be brought to Aaron the priest, or to one of his sons the priests. And the priest shall look on the disease in the skin of the flesh, and if the hair in the disease has turned white, and the appearance of the disease is deeper than the skin of his flesh, it is a leprous disease. And the priest shall look on him, and pronounce him unclean" (13:1-3).

A scab

"And if the bright spot is white in the skin of his flesh, and the appearance of it is not deeper than the skin, and the hair of it has not turned white, then the priest shall shut up the disease seven days. And the priest shall look on him the seventh day, and, behold, if in his eyes the disease is arrested, and the disease is not spread in the skin, then the priest shall shut him up seven days more. And the priest shall

look on him again the seventh day, and, behold, if the disease is dim, and the disease has not spread in the skin, then the priest shall pronounce him clean. It is a scab, and he shall wash his clothes, and be clean.

"But if the scab spreads abroad in the skin after he has shown himself to the priest for his cleansing, he shall show himself to the priest again. And the priest shall look, and, behold, if the scab is spread in the skin, then the priest shall pronounce him unclean. It is a leprous disease" (13:4-8).

Raw flesh or whiteness

"When the leprous disease is in a man, then he shall be brought to the priest. And the priest shall look, and, behold, if there is a white rising in the skin, and it has turned the hair white, and there is quick raw flesh in the rising, it is an old leprous disease in the skin of his flesh, and the priest shall pronounce him unclean. He shall not shut him up, for he is unclean.

"And if the leprous disease breaks out abroad in the skin, and the leprous disease covers all the skin of the disease from his head even to his feet, as far as appears to the priest, then the priest shall look. And, behold, if the leprous disease has covered all his flesh, he shall pronounce *him clean of* the disease. It is all turned white; he is clean.

"But whenever raw flesh appears in him, he shall be unclean. And the priest shall look on the raw flesh, and pronounce him unclean. The raw flesh is unclean; it is a leprous disease. Or if the raw flesh turns again, and is changed to white, then he shall come to the priest. And the priest shall look on him, and, behold, if the disease is turned into white, then the priest shall pronounce *him clean of* the disease; he is clean" (13:9-17).

A boil

"And when the flesh has a boil in the skin of it, and it is healed, and in the place of the boil there is a white rising, or a bright spot, reddish-white, then it shall be shown to the priest. And the priest shall look, and, behold, if the appearance of it is deeper than the skin, and the hair of it has turned white, then the priest shall pronounce him unclean. It is a leprous disease; it has broken out in the boil.

"But if the priest looks on it, and, behold, there are no white hairs in it, and it is not deeper than the skin, but is dim, then the priest shall shut him up seven days. And if it spreads abroad in the skin, then the priest shall pronounce him unclean; it is a disease. But if the bright spot stays in its place, and has not spread, it is the scar of the boil, and the priest shall pronounce him clean" (13:18-23).

A burning

"Or when the flesh has a burning by fire in the skin of it, and the quick of the burning become a bright spot, reddish-white, or white, then the priest shall look upon it. And, behold, if the hair in the bright spot has turned white, and the appearance of it

is deeper than the skin, it is a leprous disease. It has broken out in the burning, and the priest shall pronounce him unclean; it is a leprous disease.

"But if the priest looks on it, and, behold, there is no white hair in the bright spot, and it is no deeper than the skin, but is dim, then the priest shall shut him up seven days. And the priest shall look upon him the seventh day. If it spread abroad in the skin, then the priest shall pronounce him unclean; it is a leprous disease. And if the bright spot stays in its place, and has not spread in the skin, but is dim, it is the rising of the burning, and the priest shall pronounce him clean, for it is the scar of the burning" (13:24-28).

A scall

"And when a man or woman has a disease upon the head or upon the beard, then the priest shall look on the disease. And, behold, if the appearance of it is deeper than the skin, and there is yellow thin hair in it, then the priest shall pronounce him unclean; it is a scall. It is a leprous disease of the head or of the beard.

"And if the priest looks on the disease of the scall, and, behold, the appearance of it is not deeper than the skin, and there is no black hair in it, then the priest shall shut up the disease of the scall seven days. And in the seventh day the priest shall look on the disease, and, behold, if the scall has not spread, and there is in it no yellow hair, and the appearance of the scall is not deeper than the skin, then he shall be shaven, but the scall he shall not shave, and the priest shall shut up *him who has* the scall seven days more.

"And in the seventh day the priest shall look on the scall, and, behold, if the scall has not spread in the skin, and the appearance of it is not deeper than the skin, then the priest shall pronounce him clean. And he shall wash his clothes, and be clean.

"But if the scall spreads abroad in the skin after his cleansing, then the priest shall look on him. And, behold, if the scall has spread in the skin, the priest shall not seek for the yellow hair, he is unclean. But if in his eyes the scall is arrested, and black hair is grown up in it, the scall is healed. He is clean, and the priest shall pronounce him clean" (13:29-37).

A tetter

"And when a man or a woman has bright spots in the skin of the flesh, even white bright spots, then the priest shall look. And, behold, if the bright spots in the skin of their flesh are of a dull white, it is a tetter. It has broken out in the skin; he is clean" (13:38-39).

Baldness

"And if a man's hair is fallen off his head, he is bald; he is clean. And if his hair is fallen off from the front part of his head, he is forehead bald; he is clean. But if there is a reddish-white disease in the bald head, or the bald forehead, it is a leprous disease breaking out in his bald head, or his bald forehead.

"Then the priest shall look upon him, and, behold, if the rising of the disease is reddish-white in his bald head, or in his bald forehead, as the appearance of a leprous disease in the skin of the flesh, he is a leprous man; he is unclean. The priest shall surely pronounce him unclean; his disease is on his head" (13:40-44).

Isolation of leprous diseases

"And the man with a leprous disease in whom the disease is, his clothes shall be torn, and the hair of his head shall go loose, and he shall cover his upper lip, and shall cry, Unclean, unclean. All the days in which the disease is in him he shall be unclean; he is unclean. He shall dwell alone; his dwelling shall be outside the camp" (13:45-46).

A Garment with a Leprous Disease

"The garment also that a leprous disease is in, whether it be a woolen garment, or a linen garment, whether it be in warp, or woof, of linen, or of woolen, whether in a skin, or in anything made of skin, if the disease is greenish or reddish in the garment, or in the skin, or in the warp, or in the woof, or in anything of skin, it is a leprous disease, and shall be shown to the priest" (13:47-49).

When to burn it

"And the priest shall look upon the disease, and shut up the disease seven days. And he shall look on the disease on the seventh day. If the disease has spread in the garment, either in the warp, or in the woof, or in the skin, whatever service skin is used for, the disease is a fretting leprosy, it is unclean. And he shall burn the garment, whether the warp or the woof, in woolen or in linen, or anything of skin, in which the disease is, for it is a fretting leprosy. It shall be burnt in the fire.

"And if the priest shall look, and, behold, the disease has not spread in the garment, either in the warp, or in the woof, or in anything of skin, then the priest shall command that they wash the thing in which the disease is, and he shall shut it up seven more days.

"And the priest shall look, after the disease is washed, and, behold, if the disease has not changed its color, and the disease has not spread, it is unclean. Thou shall burn it in the fire. It is a fret, whether the bareness be inside or outside" (13:50-55).

When not to burn it

"And if the priest looks, and, behold, the disease is dim after the washing of it, then he shall tear it out of the garment, or out of the skin, or out of the warp, or out of the woof. And if it still appears in the garment, either in the warp, or in the woof, or in anything of skin, it is breaking out. Thou shall burn that in which the disease is with fire. And the garment, either the warp, or the woof, or whatever thing of skin it be, which thou shall wash, if the disease has departed from them, then it shall be washed the second time, and shall be clean.

"This is the law of a leprous disease in a garment of woolen or linen, either in the warp, or the woof, or anything of skin, to pronounce it clean, or to pronounce it unclean" (13:56-59).

When a Man's Leprous Disease Is Healed

An offering of birds

"And Jehovah spoke to Moses, saying, This shall be the law of the man with a leprous disease in the day of his cleansing: He shall be brought to the priest, and the priest shall go forth out of the camp. And the priest shall look, and, behold, if a leprous disease be healed in the man with a leprous disease, then the priest shall command to take two living clean birds, and cedar wood, and scarlet, and hyssop for him who is to be cleansed.

"And the priest shall command to kill one of the birds in an earthen vessel over running water. As for the living bird, he shall take it, and the cedar wood, and the scarlet, and the hyssop, and shall dip them and the living bird in the blood of the bird that was killed over the running water. And he shall sprinkle seven times upon him who is to be cleansed from the leprous disease, and shall pronounce him clean, and shall let the living bird go into the open field" (14:1-7).

Wash and shave

"And he who is to be cleansed shall wash his clothes, and shave off all his hair, and bathe himself in water, and he shall be clean. And after that he shall come into the camp, but shall dwell outside his tent seven days. And it shall be on the seventh day, that he shall shave all his hair off his head and his beard and his eyebrows, even all his hair he shall shave off. And he shall wash his clothes, and he shall bathe his flesh in water, and he shall be clean" (14:8-9).

Offering three lambs

"And on the eighth day he shall take two he-lambs without blemish, and one ewe-lamb a year old without blemish, and three tenth parts *of an ephah* of fine flour for a meal offering, mingled with oil, and one log of oil. And the priest who cleanses him shall set the man who is to be cleansed, and those things, before Jehovah, at the door of the tent of meeting.

"And the priest shall take one of the he-lambs, and offer him for a trespass offering, and the log of oil, and wave them for a wave offering before Jehovah. And he shall kill the he-lamb in the place where they kill the sin offering and the burnt offering, in the place of the sanctuary. For as the sin offering is the priest's, so is the trespass offering; it is most holy.

"And the priest shall take of the blood of the trespass offering, and the priest shall put it upon the tip of the right ear of him who is to be cleansed, and upon the thumb of his right hand, and upon the great toe of his right foot. And the priest shall take of the log of oil, and pour it into the palm of his own left hand. And the priest shall

dip his right finger in the oil that is in his left hand, and shall sprinkle of the oil with his finger seven times before Jehovah. And of the rest of the oil that is in his hand the priest shall put upon the tip of the right ear of him who is to be cleansed, and upon the thumb of his right hand, and upon the great toe of his right foot, upon the blood of the trespass offering. And the rest of the oil that is in the priest's hand he shall put upon the head of him who is to be cleansed, and the priest shall make atonement for him before Jehovah.

"And the priest shall offer the sin offering, and make atonement for him who is to be cleansed because of his uncleanness, and afterward he shall kill the burnt offering. And the priest shall offer the burnt offering and the meal offering upon the altar, and the priest shall make atonement for him, and he shall be clean" (14:10-20).

If he cannot afford three lambs

"And if he is poor, and cannot get so much, then he shall take one he-lamb for a trespass offering to be waved, to make atonement for him, and one tenth part *of an ephah* of fine flour mingled with oil for a meal offering, and a log of oil, and two turtle-doves, or two young pigeons, such as he is able to get, and the one shall be a sin offering, and the other a burnt offering.

"And on the eighth day he shall bring them for his cleansing to the priest, to the door of the tent of meeting, before Jehovah. And the priest shall take the lamb of the trespass offering, and the log of oil, and the priest shall wave them for a wave offering before Jehovah. And he shall kill the lamb of the trespass offering.

"And the priest shall take of the blood of the trespass offering, and put it upon the tip of the right ear of him who is to be cleansed, and upon the thumb of his right hand, and upon the great toe of his right foot. And the priest shall pour of the oil into the palm of his own left hand. And the priest shall sprinkle with his right finger some of the oil that is in his left hand seven times before Jehovah.

"And the priest shall put of the oil that is in his hand upon the tip of the right ear of him who is to be cleansed, and upon the thumb of his right hand, and upon the great toe of his right foot, upon the place of the blood of the trespass offering. And the rest of the oil that is in the priest's hand he shall put upon the head of him who is to be cleansed, to make atonement for him before Jehovah.

"And he shall offer one of the turtle-doves, or of the young pigeons, such as he is able to get, even such as he is able to get, the one for a sin offering, and the other for a burnt offering, with the meal offering, and the priest shall make atonement for him who is to be cleansed before Jehovah. This is the law of him in whom is a leprous disease, who is not able to get *what pertains* to his cleansing" (14:21-32).

A Leprous Disease in a House

The first examination

"And Jehovah spoke to Moses and to Aaron, saying, When ye have come into the land of Canaan, which I give to you for a possession, and I put a leprous disease in a house of the land of your possession, then he who owns the house shall come and tell the priest, saying, There seems to me to be as it were a disease in the house. And the priest shall command that they empty the house before the priest goes in to see the disease, that all that is in the house not be made unclean.

"And afterward the priest shall go in to see the house, and he shall look on the disease. And, behold, if the disease is in the walls of the house with hollow streaks, greenish or reddish, and the appearance of it is deeper than the wall *surface*, then the priest shall go out of the house to the door of the house, and shut up the house seven days" (14:33-38).

If it has spread

"And the priest shall come again the seventh day, and shall look. And, behold, if the disease has spread in the walls of the house, then the priest shall command that they take out the stones in which the disease is, and cast them into an unclean place outside the city. And he shall cause the house to be scraped inside round about, and they shall pour out the mortar, that they scrape off, outside the city into an unclean place. And they shall take other stones, and put them in the place of those stones. And he shall take other mortar, and shall plaster the house.

"And if the disease comes again, and breaks out in the house, after he has taken out the stones, and after he has scraped the house, and after it is plastered, then the priest shall come in and look. And, behold, if the disease has spread in the house, it is a fretting leprosy in the house; it is unclean. And he shall break down the house, the stones of it, and the timber of it, and all the mortar of the house, and he shall carry them forth out of the city into an unclean place. Moreover he who goes into the house all the while that it is shut up shall be unclean until the evening. And he who lies in the house shall wash his clothes. And he who eats in the house shall wash his clothes" (14:39-47).

If it has not spread

"And if the priest shall come in, and look, and, behold, the disease has not spread in the house after the house was plastered, then the priest shall pronounce the house clean, because the disease is healed. And he shall take two birds, and cedar wood, and scarlet, and hyssop to cleanse the house. And he shall kill one of the birds in an earthen vessel over running water. And he shall take the cedar wood, and the hyssop, and the scarlet, and the living bird, and dip them in the blood of the slain bird, and in the running water, and sprinkle the house seven times. And he shall cleanse the house with the blood of the bird, and with the running water, and with the living bird, and with the cedar wood, and with the hyssop, and with the scarlet, but he shall

let the living bird go out of the city into the open field. So he shall make atonement for the house, and it shall be clean" (14:48-53).

Summary

After giving all those laws about leprous diseases the text says, **"This is the law for all manner of a leprous disease, and for a scall, and for a leprous disease of a garment, and for a house, and for a rising, and for a scab, and for a bright spot, to teach when it is unclean, and when it is clean. This is the law of a leprous disease"** (14:54-57).

Uncleanness from Body Fluids

An issue out of the body

"And Jehovah spoke to Moses and to Aaron, saying, Speak to the sons of Israel, and say to them, When any man has an issue out of his flesh, he is unclean because of his issue. And this shall be his uncleanness in his issue, whether his flesh runs with his issue, or his flesh has stopped from his issue, it is his uncleanness.

"Every bed on which he who has the issue lies shall be unclean, and everything on which he sits shall be unclean. And whoever touches his bed shall wash his clothes, and bathe himself in water, and be unclean until the evening. And he who sits on anything on which he who has the issue sat shall wash his clothes, and bathe himself in water, and be unclean until the evening. And he who touches the flesh of him who has the issue shall wash his clothes, and bathe himself in water, and be unclean until the evening. And if he who has the issue spits upon him who is clean, then he shall wash his clothes, and bathe himself in water, and be unclean until the evening. And whatever saddle he who has the issue rides upon shall be unclean.

"And whoever touches anything that was under him shall be unclean until the evening. And he who bears those things shall wash his clothes, and bathe himself in water, and be unclean until the evening. And whomever he who has the issue touches, without having rinsed his hands in water, he shall wash his clothes, and bathe himself in water, and be unclean until the evening. And the earthen vessel, which he who has the issue touches, shall be broken, and every vessel of wood shall be rinsed in water.

"And when he who has an issue is cleansed of his issue, then he shall number to himself seven days for his cleansing, and wash his clothes, and he shall bathe his flesh in running water, and shall be clean. And on the eighth day he shall take to him two turtle-doves, or two young pigeons, and come before Jehovah to the door of the tent of meeting, and give them to the priest. And the priest shall offer them, the one for a sin offering, and the other for a burnt offering, and the priest shall make atonement for him before Jehovah for his issue" (15:1-15).

The seed of copulation

"And if any man's seed of copulation go out from him, then he shall bathe all his flesh in water, and be unclean until the evening. And every garment, and every skin, on which is the seed of copulation, shall be washed with water, and be unclean until the evening. The woman also with whom a man shall lie with seed of copulation, they shall both bathe themselves in water, and be unclean until the evening" (15:16-18).

The menstrual discharge

If it is normal

"And if a woman has an issue, *and* her issue in her flesh is blood, she shall be seven days in her impurity, and whoever touches her shall be unclean until the evening. And everything that she lies upon in her impurity shall be unclean. Also everything that she sits upon shall be unclean.

"And whoever touches her bed shall wash his clothes, and bathe himself in water, and be unclean until the evening. And whoever touches anything that she sits upon shall wash his clothes, and bathe himself in water, and be unclean until the evening. And if it be on the bed, or on anything on which she sits, when he touches it, he shall be unclean until the evening. And if any man lies with her, and her impurity be upon him, he shall be unclean seven days, and every bed on which he lies shall be unclean" (15:19-24).

If it is abnormal

"And if a woman has an issue of her blood many days not in the time of her impurity, or if she has an issue beyond the time of her impurity, she shall be all the days of the issue of her uncleanness as in the days of her impurity; she is unclean. Every bed on which she lies all the days of her issue shall be to her as the bed of her impurity, and everything on which she sits shall be unclean, as the uncleanness of her impurity. And whoever touches those things shall be unclean, and shall wash his clothes, and bathe himself in water, and be unclean until the evening.

"But if she is cleansed of her issue, then she shall number to herself seven days, and after that she shall be clean. And on the eighth day she shall take to her two turtle-doves, or two young pigeons, and bring them to the priest, to the door of the tent of meeting. And the priest shall offer the one for a sin offering, and the other for a burnt offering, and the priest shall make atonement for her before Jehovah for the issue of her uncleanness" (15:25-30).

Summary

"Thus ye shall separate the sons of Israel from their uncleanness, that they not die in their uncleanness when they defile my tabernacle that is in the midst of them. This is the law of him who has an issue, and of him whose seed of copulation goes from him, so that he is unclean thereby, and of her who is sick with her impurity, and of him

who has an issue, of the man, and of the woman, and of him who lies with her who is unclean" (15:31-33).

The Day of Atonement

Entering the most holy place

"And Jehovah spoke to Moses, after the death of the two sons of Aaron, when they drew near before Jehovah, and died, and Jehovah said to Moses, Speak to Aaron thy brother, that he not come at all times into the holy place within the veil, before the mercy-seat which is upon the ark, that he not die, for I will appear in the cloud upon the mercy-seat.

"Aaron shall come into the holy place this way: with a young bullock for a sin offering, and a ram for a burnt offering. He shall put on the holy linen tunic, and he shall have the linen breeches upon his flesh, and shall be girded with the linen sash, and he shall be attired with the linen miter. They are the holy garments, and he shall bathe his flesh in water, and put them on. And he shall take from the congregation of the sons of Israel two he-goats for a sin offering, and one ram for a burnt offering. And Aaron shall present the bullock of the sin offering, which is for himself, and make atonement for himself, and for his house" (16:1-6).

The scapegoat

"And he shall take the two goats, and set them before Jehovah at the door of the tent of meeting. And Aaron shall cast lots upon the two goats, one lot for Jehovah, and the other lot for the scapegoat. And Aaron shall present the goat upon which the lot fell for Jehovah, and offer him for a sin offering. But the goat, on which the lot fell for the scapegoat, shall be set alive before Jehovah, to make atonement for him, to send him away for the scapegoat into the wilderness" (16:7-10).

The priest atoning for himself

"And Aaron shall present the bullock of the sin offering, which is for himself, and shall make atonement for himself, and for his house, and shall kill the bullock of the sin offering which is for himself. And he shall take a censer full of coals of fire from off the altar before Jehovah, and his hands full of sweet incense beaten small, and bring it within the veil. And he shall put the incense upon the fire before Jehovah, that the cloud of the incense may cover the mercy-seat that is upon the testimony, that he not die. And he shall take of the blood of the bullock, and sprinkle it with his finger upon the mercy-seat on the east. And he shall sprinkle of the blood with his finger seven times before the mercy-seat" (16:11-14).

Atonement for the most holy place

"Then he shall kill the goat of the sin offering, that is for the people, and bring his blood within the veil, and do with his blood as he did with the blood of the bullock, and sprinkle it upon the mercy-seat, and before the mercy-seat. And he shall make atonement for the holy place, because of the uncleannesses of the sons of Israel, and

because of their transgressions, even all their sins. And so he shall do for the tent of meeting that dwells with them in the midst of their uncleannesses.

"And there shall be no man in the tent of meeting when he goes in to make atonement in the holy place until he comes out, and has made atonement for himself, and for his household, and for all the assembly of Israel" (16:15-17).

Atonement for the altar

"And he shall go out to the altar that is before Jehovah, and make atonement for it. And shall take of the blood of the bullock, and of the blood of the goat, and put it upon the horns of the altar round about. And he shall sprinkle of the blood upon it with his finger seven times, and cleanse it, and hallow it from the uncleannesses of the sons of Israel" (16:18-19).

Sending away the scapegoat

"And when he has made an end of atoning for the holy place, and the tent of meeting, and the altar, he shall present the live goat. And Aaron shall lay both his hands upon the head of the live goat, and confess over him all the iniquities of the sons of Israel, and all their transgressions, even all their sins. And he shall put them upon the head of the goat, and shall send him away by the hand of a man who is in readiness into the wilderness. And the goat shall bear upon him all their iniquities to a solitary land. And he shall let the goat go in the wilderness" (16:20-22).

Atoning for himself and the people

"And Aaron shall come into the tent of meeting, and shall put off the linen garments, which he put on when he went into the holy place, and shall leave them there. And he shall bathe his flesh in water in a holy place, and put on his garments, and come forth, and offer his burnt offering and the burnt offering of the people, and make atonement for himself and for the people. And he shall burn upon the altar the fat of the sin offering" (16:23-25).

Washings required

"And he who lets the goat go for the scapegoat shall wash his clothes, and bathe his flesh in water, and afterward he shall come into the camp. And the bullock of the sin offering, and the goat of the sin offering, whose blood was brought in to make atonement in the holy place, shall be carried forth outside the camp, and they shall burn in the fire their skins, and their flesh, and their dung. And he who burns them shall wash his clothes, and bathe his flesh in water, and afterward he shall come into the camp" (16:26-28).

A day of fasting

"And it shall be a statute forever to you. In the seventh month, on the tenth day of the month, ye shall afflict your souls, and shall do no manner of work, the home-born, or the stranger who sojourns among you. For on this day atonement shall be made for you, to cleanse you. Ye shall be clean from all your sins before Jehovah. It is a sab-

bath of solemn rest to you, and ye shall afflict your souls. It is a statute forever" (16:29-31).

The high priest once a year

"And the priest, who shall be anointed and who shall be consecrated to be priest in his father's stead, shall make the atonement. And he shall put on the linen garments, even the holy garments, and shall make atonement for the holy sanctuary, and he shall make atonement for the tent of meeting and for the altar, and he shall make atonement for the priests and for all the people of the assembly. And this shall be an everlasting statute to you, to make atonement for the sons of Israel because of all their sins once in the year. And he did as Jehovah commanded Moses" (16:32-34).

More Laws

One place for animal sacrifices

"And Jehovah spoke to Moses, saying, Speak to Aaron, and to his sons, and to all the sons of Israel, and say to them, This is the thing which Jehovah has commanded, saying, Whatever man there is of the house of Israel, who kills an ox, or lamb, or goat, in the camp, or who kills it outside the camp, and has not brought it to the door of the tent of meeting, to offer it as an oblation to Jehovah before the tabernacle of Jehovah, blood shall be imputed to that man. He has shed blood, and that man shall be cut off from among his people, to the end that the sons of Israel may bring their sacrifices, which they sacrifice in the open field, even that they may bring them to Jehovah, to the door of the tent of meeting, to the priest, and sacrifice them for sacrifices of peace offerings to Jehovah. And the priest shall sprinkle the blood upon the altar of Jehovah at the door of the tent of meeting, and burn the fat for a sweet savor to Jehovah.

"And they shall no more sacrifice their sacrifices to the he-goats, after which they play the harlot. This shall be a statute forever to them throughout their generations. And thou shall say to them, Whatever man there is of the house of Israel, or of the strangers that sojourn among them, who offers a burnt offering or sacrifice, and does not bring it to the door of the tent of meeting, to sacrifice it to Jehovah, that man shall be cut off from his people" (17:1-9).

Eat no blood

"And whatever man there is of the house of Israel, or of the strangers that sojourn among them, who eats any manner of blood, I will set my face against that soul who eats blood, and will cut him off from among his people. For the life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it to you upon the altar to make atonement for your souls, for it is the blood that makes atonement by reason of the life. Therefore I said to the sons of Israel, No soul of you shall eat blood, nor shall any stranger that sojourns among you eat blood.

"And whatever man there is of the sons of Israel, or of the strangers that sojourn among them, who takes any beast or bird in hunting that may be eaten, he shall pour out the blood of it, and cover it with dust. For as to the life of all flesh, the blood of it is with the life of it. Therefore I said to the sons of Israel, Ye shall eat the blood of no manner of flesh, for the life of all flesh is the blood of it. Whoever eats it shall be cut off" (17:10-14).

Eating non-slaughtered flesh

"And every soul who eats that which dies of itself, or that which is torn of beasts, whether he be home-born or a sojourner, he shall wash his clothes, and bathe himself in water, and be unclean until the evening, then he shall be clean. But if he does not wash them, nor bathe his flesh, then he shall bear his iniquity" (17:15-16).

Live by the laws of God

"And Jehovah spoke to Moses, saying, Speak to the sons of Israel, and say to them, I am Jehovah your God. Ye shall not do after the doings of the land of Egypt, in which ye dwelt, and ye shall not do after the doings of the land of Canaan, where I bring you, nor shall ye walk in their statutes. Ye shall do my ordinances, and ye shall keep my statutes, to walk therein. I am Jehovah your God. Ye shall therefore keep my statutes, and my ordinances, which if a man does, he shall live in them. I am Jehovah" (18:1-5).

Sins of Sex

Sexual intimacy with near kin

"None of you shall approach to any who are near of kin to him, to uncover nakedness. I am Jehovah. The nakedness of thy father, even the nakedness of thy mother, thou shall not uncover. She is thy mother. Thou shall not uncover her nakedness, the nakedness of thy father's wife. It is thy father's nakedness. The nakedness of thy sister, the daughter of thy father, or the daughter of thy mother, whether born at home, or born abroad, even their nakedness thou shall not uncover. The nakedness of thy son's daughter, or of thy daughter's daughter, even their nakedness thou shall not uncover, for theirs is thine own nakedness. The nakedness of thy father's wife's daughter, begotten of thy father, she is thy sister, thou shall not uncover her nakedness. Thou shall not uncover the nakedness of thy father's sister. She is thy father's near kinswoman. Thou shall not uncover the nakedness of thy mother's sister, for she is thy mother's near kinswoman. Thou shall not uncover the nakedness of thy father's brother. Thou shall not approach to his wife. She is thine aunt. Thou shall not uncover the nakedness of thy daughter-in-law. She is thy son's wife. Thou shall not uncover her nakedness. Thou shall not uncover the nakedness of thy brother's wife. It is thy brother's nakedness. Thou shall not uncover the nakedness of a woman and her daughter. Thou shall not take her son's daughter, or her daughter's daughter, to uncover her nakedness. They are near kinswomen. It is iniquity" (18:6-17).

Other sins of sex

"And thou shall not take a wife in addition to her sister, to be a rival *to her*, to uncover her nakedness, besides the other in her life-time.

"And thou shall not approach to a woman to uncover her nakedness, as long as she is impure by her uncleanness.

"And thou shall not lie carnally with thy neighbor's wife, to defile thyself with her.

(Child sacrifice and profaning God's name)

"And thou shall not give any of thy seed to make them pass through *the fire* to Molech, neither shall thou profane the name of thy God. I am Jehovah.

Other sins of sex

"Thou shall not lie with mankind, as with womankind. It is abomination.

"And thou shall not lie with any beast to defile thyself with it, nor shall any woman stand before a beast, to lie down with it. It is a perversion" (18:18-23).

They defile the land

"Do not defile ye yourselves in any of these things. For in all these the nations are defiled which I cast out from before you, and the land is defiled. Therefore I visit the iniquity of it upon it, and the land vomits out its inhabitants.

"Ye therefore shall keep my statutes and my ordinances, and shall not do any of these abominations, neither the home-born, nor the stranger that sojourns among you, (all these abominations the men of the land have done, who were before you, and the land is defiled), that the land not vomit you out also, when ye defile it, as it vomited out the nation that was before you.

"For whoever shall do any of these abominations, even the souls that do them shall be cut off from among their people. Therefore ye shall keep my charge, that ye not practice any of these abominable customs, which were practiced before you, and that ye not defile yourselves in it. I am Jehovah your God" (18:24-30).

More Laws

Be holy

"And Jehovah spoke to Moses, saying, Speak to all the congregation of the sons of Israel, and say to them, Ye shall be holy, for I Jehovah your God am holy" (19:1-2).

Fear your mother and father

"Every man shall fear his mother and his father" (19:3).

Keep the sabbaths

"And ye shall keep my sabbaths. I am Jehovah your God" (19:3).

Turn from idols

"Turn ye not to idols, nor make to yourselves molten gods. I am Jehovah your God" (19:4).

When to eat the peace offering

"And when ye offer a sacrifice of peace offerings to Jehovah, ye shall offer it that ye may be accepted. It shall be eaten the same day ye offer it, and on the morrow. And if any remain until the third day, it shall be burnt with fire. And if it is eaten at all on the third day, it is an abomination. It shall not be accepted. But he who eats it shall bear his iniquity, because he has profaned the holy thing of Jehovah, and that soul shall be cut off from his people" (19:5-8).

Leave some crops for the poor

"And when ye reap the harvest of your land, thou shall not wholly reap the corners of thy field, nor shall thou gather the gleaning of thy harvest. And thou shall not glean thy vineyard, nor shall thou gather the fallen fruit of thy vineyard. Thou shall leave them for the poor man and for the sojourner. I am Jehovah your God" (19:9-10).

Do not steal or deal falsely

"Ye shall not steal, nor shall ye deal falsely, nor lie one to another" (19:11).

Swear not falsely by God's name

"And ye shall not swear by my name falsely, and profane the name of thy God. I am Jehovah" (19:12).

No oppression or robbery

"Thou shall not oppress thy neighbor, nor rob him" (19:13).

A servant's wages

"The wages of a hired servant shall not abide with thee all night until the morning" (19:13).

Afflict not the handicapped

"Thou shall not curse the deaf, nor put a stumbling block before the blind, but thou shall fear thy God. I am Jehovah" (19:14).

Be just

"Ye shall do no unrighteousness in judgment. Thou shall not respect the person of the poor man, nor honor the person of the mighty man, but thou shall judge thy neighbor in righteousness" (19:15).

Do not gossip or be a threat to a neighbor

"Thou shall not go up and down as a talebearer among thy people, neither shall thou stand against the blood of thy neighbor. I am Jehovah" (19:16).

Do not harbor hatred toward a brother

"Thou shall not hate thy brother in thy heart. Thou shall surely rebuke thy neighbor, and not bear sin because of him" (19:17).

Take not vengeance or bear a grudge

"Thou shall not take vengeance, nor bear any grudge against the sons of thy people," (19:18).

Love thy neighbor

"... but thou shall love thy neighbor as thyself. I am Jehovah. Ye shall keep my statutes" (19:18-19).

Mixing some things

"Thou shall not let thy cattle engender with a diverse kind. Thou shall not sow thy field with two kinds of seed, neither shall there come upon thee a garment of two kinds of stuff mingled together" (19:19).

Sexual intimacy with a betrothed bondmaid

"And whoever lies carnally with a woman, who is a bondmaid, betrothed to a husband, and not at all redeemed, nor freedom given her, they shall be punished. They shall not be put to death, because she was not free. And he shall bring his trespass offering to Jehovah, to the door of the tent of meeting, even a ram for a trespass offering. And the priest shall make atonement for him with the ram of the trespass offering before Jehovah for his sin which he has sinned. And the sin which he has sinned shall be forgiven him" (19:20-22).

The first harvest from trees

"And when ye shall come into the land, and shall have planted all manner of trees for food, then ye shall count the fruit of it as their uncircumcision. Three years they shall be as uncircumcised to you; it shall not be eaten. But in the fourth year all the fruit of it shall be holy, for giving praise to Jehovah. And in the fifth year ye shall eat of the fruit of it, that it may yield to you the increase of it. I am Jehovah your God" (19:23-25).

Eat nothing with the blood

"Ye shall not eat anything with the blood" (19:26).

Do no sorcery

"Neither shall ye use enchantments, nor practice augury" (19:26).

Do not disfigure your body

"Ye shall not round the corners of your heads, nor shall thou mar the corners of thy beard. Ye shall not make any cuttings in your flesh for the dead, nor print any marks upon you. I am Jehovah" (19:27-28).

Do not make your daughter a harlot

"Do not profane thy daughter, to make her a harlot, lest the land fall to whoredom, and the land become full of wickedness" (19:29).

Keep the sabbaths and reverence the sanctuary

"Ye shall keep my sabbaths, and reverence my sanctuary. I am Jehovah" (19:30).

Shun sorcerers

"Do not turn to those who have familiar spirits, nor to the wizards. Do not seek them out, to be defiled by them. I am Jehovah your God" (19:31).

Honor the aged

"Thou shall rise up before the hoary head, and honor the face of the old man, and thou shall fear thy God. I am Jehovah" (19:32).

Respect sojourners

"And if a stranger sojourns with thee in your land, ye shall not do him wrong. The stranger that sojourns with you shall be to you as the home-born among you, and thou shall love him as thyself, for ye were sojourners in the land of Egypt. I am Jehovah your God" (19:33-34).

Have just measures

"Ye shall do no unrighteousness in judgment, in measures of length, of weight, or of quantity. Ye shall have just balances, just weights, a just ephah, and a just hin. I am Jehovah your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt" (19:35-36).

Obey all the laws

"And ye shall observe all my statutes, and all my ordinances, and do them. I am Jehovah" (19:37).

Do not sacrifice children

"And Jehovah spoke to Moses, saying, Moreover, thou shall say to the sons of Israel, Whoever he is of the sons of Israel, or of the strangers that sojourn in Israel, who gives of his seed to Molech, he shall surely be put to death. The people of the land shall stone him with stones. I also will set my face against that man, and will cut him off from among his people, because he has given of his seed to Molech, to defile my sanctuary, and to profane my holy name.

"And if the people at the land do at all hide their eyes from that man, when he gives of his seed to Molech, and do not put him to death, then I will set my face against that man, and against his family, and will cut him off, and all who play the harlot after him, to play the harlot with Molech, from among their people" (20:1-5).

Shun sorcerers

"And the soul that turns to those who have familiar spirits, and to the wizards, to play the harlot after them, I will even set my face against that soul, and will cut him off from among his people" (20:6).

Be ye holy and obedient

"Sanctify yourselves therefore, and become ye holy, for I am Jehovah your God. And ye shall keep my statutes, and do them. I am Jehovah who sanctifies you" (20:7-8).

Do not curse your father or mother

"For he who curses his father or his mother shall surely be put to death. He has cursed his father or his mother; his blood shall be upon him" (20:9).

Various laws about sins of sex

"And the man who commits adultery with another man's wife, even he who commits adultery with his neighbor's wife, the adulterer and the adulteress shall surely be put to death.

"And the man who lies with his father's wife has uncovered his father's nakedness. Both of them shall surely be put to death, their blood shall be upon them.

"And if a man lies with his daughter-in-law, both of them shall surely be put to death. They have wrought perversion. Their blood shall be upon them.

"And if a man lies with a man, as with a woman, both of them have committed abomination. They shall surely be put to death; their blood shall be upon them.

"And if a man takes a wife and her mother, it is wickedness. They shall be burnt with fire, both he and they, that there be no wickedness among you.

"And if a man lies with a beast, he shall surely be put to death, and ye shall kill the beast. And if a woman approaches to any beast, and lies down with it, thou shall kill the woman and the beast. They shall surely be put to death; their blood shall be upon them.

"And if a man shall take his sister, his father's daughter, or his mother's daughter, and see her nakedness, and she sees his nakedness, it is a shameful thing, and they shall be cut off in the sight of the sons of their people. He has uncovered his sister's nakedness; he shall bear his iniquity.

"And if a man shall lie with a woman having her sickness, and shall uncover her nakedness, he has made naked her fountain, and she has uncovered the fountain of her blood. And both of them shall be cut off from among their people.

"And thou shall not uncover the nakedness of thy mother's sister, nor of thy father's sister, for he has made naked his near kin. They shall bear their iniquity. And if a man shall lie with his uncle's wife, he has uncovered his uncle's nakedness. They

shall bear their sin; they shall die childless. And if a man shall take his brother's wife, it is impurity. He has uncovered his brother's nakedness; they shall be childless" (20:10-21).

Be holy and not like the nations

"Ye shall therefore keep all my statutes, and all my ordinances, and do them, that the land, where I bring you to dwell in it, not vomit you out. And ye shall not walk in the customs of the nation which I cast out before you, for they did all these things, and therefore I abhorred them. But I have said to you, Ye shall inherit their land, and I will give it to you to possess it, a land flowing with milk and honey.

"I am Jehovah your God, who has separated you from the peoples. Ye shall therefore make a distinction between the clean beast and the unclean, and between the unclean fowl and the clean. And ye shall not make your souls abominable by beast, or by bird, or by anything with which the ground teems, which I have separated from you as unclean. And ye shall be holy to me, for I, Jehovah, am holy, and have set you apart from the peoples, that ye should be mine" (20:22-26).

Stone sorcerers

"A man or also a woman who has a familiar spirit, or that is a wizard, shall surely be put to death. They shall stone them with stones; their blood shall be upon them" (20:27).

Laws for the Priests

They should not defile themselves

"And Jehovah said to Moses, Speak to the priests, the sons of Aaron, and say to them, There shall none defile himself for the dead among his people, except for his kin, who is near to him: for his mother, and for his father, and for his son, and for his daughter, and for his brother. And for his sister a virgin, who is near to him, who has had no husband, for her he may defile himself.

"He shall not defile himself, *who is* a chief man among his people, to profane himself. They shall not make baldness upon their head, neither shall they shave off the corner of their beard, nor make any cuttings in their flesh. They shall be holy to their God, and not profane the name of their God. For they offer the offerings of Jehovah made by fire, the bread of their God. Therefore they shall be holy" (21:1-6).

Wives they cannot have

"They shall not take a woman who is a harlot, or profane, neither shall they take a woman put away from her husband, for he is holy to his God. Thou shall sanctify him therefore, for he offers the bread of thy God. He shall be holy to thee, for I Jehovah, who sanctify you, am holy" (21:7-8).

If a daughter plays the harlot

"And the daughter of any priest, if she profanes herself by playing the harlot, she profanes her father. She shall be burnt with fire" (21:9).

The high priest cannot show mourning

"And he who is the high priest among his brothers, upon whose head the anointing oil is poured, and who is consecrated to put on the garments, shall not let the hair of his head go loose, nor tear his clothes, neither shall he go in to any dead body, nor defile himself for his father, or for his mother, neither shall he go out of the sanctuary, nor profane the sanctuary of his God, for the crown of the anointing oil of his God is upon him. I am Jehovah" (21:10-12).

He must take a virgin for a wife

"And he shall take a wife in her virginity. A widow, or one divorced, or a profane woman, a harlot, these he shall not take, but he shall take to wife a virgin of his own people. And he shall not profane his seed among his people, for I am Jehovah who sanctifies him" (21:13-15).

If any have a blemish

"And Jehovah spoke to Moses, saying, Speak to Aaron, saying, Whoever he is of thy seed throughout their generations who has a blemish, let him not approach to offer the bread of his God. For whatever man he is who has a blemish, he shall not approach: *not* a blind man, or a lame *man*, or he who has a flat nose, or anything superfluous, or a man who is broken-footed, or broken-handed, or crook-backed, or a dwarf, or who has a blemish in his eye, or is scurvy, or scabbed, or has his testicles broken.

"No man of the seed of Aaron the priest, who has a blemish, shall come near to offer the offerings of Jehovah made by fire; he has a blemish, he shall not come near to offer the bread of his God. He shall eat the bread of his God, both of the most holy, and of the holy, only he shall not go in to the veil, nor come near to the altar, because he has a blemish, that he not profane my sanctuaries, for I am Jehovah who sanctifies them" (21:16-23).

Do not defile the holy things

"And Jehovah spoke to Moses, saying, Speak to Aaron and to his sons, that they separate themselves from the holy things of the sons of Israel, which they hallow to me, and that they not profane my holy name. I am Jehovah. Say to them, Whoever he is of all your seed throughout your generations, that approaches to the holy things, which the sons of Israel hallow to Jehovah, having his uncleanness upon him, that soul shall be cut off from before me. I am Jehovah" (22:1-3).

If any become unclean

"Whatever man of the seed of Aaron being a man with a leprous disease, or has an issue, he shall not eat of the holy things until he is clean. And whoever touches anything that is unclean by the dead, or a man whose seed goes from him, or whoever touches any creeping thing, by which he may be made unclean, or a man of whom he may take uncleanness, whatever uncleanness he has, the soul that touches any such shall be unclean until the evening. And shall not eat of the holy things unless he bathe his flesh in water. And when the sun is down, he shall be clean, and afterward he shall eat of the holy things, because it is his bread" (22:4-7).

Eat no non-slaughtered flesh

"That which dies of itself, or is torn by beasts, he shall not eat to defile himself with it. I am Jehovah" (22:8).

Profane nothing in their work

"They shall therefore keep my charge, lest they bear sin for it, and die in it if they profane it. I am Jehovah who sanctifies them" (22:9).

Who can eat the holy things

"There shall no stranger eat of the holy thing. A sojourner of the priest's, or a hired servant, shall not eat of the holy thing. But if a priest buys any soul, the purchase of his money, he shall eat of it, and such as are born in his house, they shall eat of his bread. And if a priest's daughter be married to a stranger, she shall not eat of the heave offering of the holy things. But if a priest's daughter be a widow, or divorced, and have no child, and is returned to her father's house, as in her youth, she shall eat of her father's bread, but there shall no stranger eat of it.

"And if a man eats of the holy thing unwittingly, then he shall put the fifth part of it to it, and shall give the holy thing to the priest. And they shall not profane the holy things of the sons of Israel, which they offer to Jehovah, and *so* cause them to bear the iniquity that brings guilt when they eat their holy things, for I am Jehovah who sanctifies them" (22:10-16).

More Laws About Offerings

Offer nothing blemished

"And Jehovah spoke to Moses, saying, Speak to Aaron, and to his sons, and to all the sons of Israel, and say to them, Whoever he is of the house of Israel, or of the sojourners in Israel, who offers his oblation, whether it be any of their vows, or any of their freewill offerings, which they offer to Jehovah for a burnt offering, that ye may be accepted, *ye shall offer* a male without blemish, of the bullocks, of the sheep, or of the goats. But whatever has a blemish, that ye shall not offer, for it shall not be acceptable for you.

"And whoever offers a sacrifice of peace offerings to Jehovah to accomplish a vow, or for a freewill offering, of the herd or of the flock, it shall be perfect to be accepted; there shall be no blemish in it. Blind, or broken, or maimed, or having a skin tumor, or scurvy, or scabbed, ye shall not offer these to Jehovah, nor make an offering by fire of them upon the altar to Jehovah. Either a bullock or a lamb that has anything superfluous or lacking in his parts, that thou may offer for a freewill offering, but it shall not be accepted for a vow. That which has its testicles bruised, or crushed, or broken, or cut, ye shall not offer to Jehovah, neither shall ye do *thus* in your land. Neither from the hand of a foreigner shall ye offer the bread of your God of any of these, because their corruption is in them; there is a blemish in them. They shall not be accepted for you" (22:17-25).

The youngest offering

"And Jehovah spoke to Moses, saying, When a bullock, or a sheep, or a goat, is brought forth, then it shall be seven days under the dam, and from the eighth day and after that it shall be accepted for the oblation of an offering made by fire to Jehovah" (22:26-27).

Killing animals and their young

"And whether it be cow or ewe, ye shall not kill it and its young both in one day" (22:28).

When to eat a sacrifice of thanksgiving

"And when ye sacrifice a sacrifice of thanksgiving to Jehovah, ye shall sacrifice it that ye may be accepted. It shall be eaten on the same day. Ye shall leave none of it until the morning. I am Jehovah" (22:29-30).

Keep the Commandments

"Therefore ye shall keep my commandments, and do them. I am Jehovah. And ye shall not profane my holy name, but I will be hallowed among the sons of Israel. I am Jehovah who hallows you, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, to be your God. I am Jehovah" (22:31-33).

The Set Feasts

The sabbath day

"And Jehovah spoke to Moses, saying, Speak to the sons of Israel, and say to them, The set feasts of Jehovah, which ye shall proclaim to be holy convocations, even these are my set feasts. Six days shall work be done, but on the seventh day is a sabbath of solemn rest, a holy convocation. Ye shall do no manner of work. It is a sabbath to Jehovah in all your dwellings" (23:1-3).

The first month

"These are the set feasts of Jehovah, even holy convocations, which ye shall proclaim in their appointed season: In the first month, on the fourteenth day of the month at evening, is Jehovah's Passover.

"And on the fifteenth day of the same month is the feast of unleavened bread to Jehovah. Ye shall eat unleavened bread seven days. In the first day ye shall have a holy convocation. Ye shall do no job work. But ye shall offer an offering made by fire to Jehovah seven days. In the seventh day is a holy convocation, ye shall do no job work" (23:4-8).

Offering the first-fruits

"And Jehovah spoke to Moses, saying, Speak to the sons of Israel, and say to them, When ye have come into the land which I give to you, and shall reap the harvest of it, then ye shall bring the sheaf of the first-fruits of your harvest to the priest. And he shall wave the sheaf before Jehovah, to be accepted for you. On the morrow after the sabbath the priest shall wave it.

"And in the day when ye wave the sheaf, ye shall offer a he-lamb without blemish a year old for a burnt offering to Jehovah. And the meal offering of it shall be two tenth parts *of an ephah* of fine flour mingled with oil, an offering made by fire to Jehovah for a sweet savor. And the drink offering of it shall be of wine, the fourth part of a hin. And ye shall eat neither bread, nor parched grain, nor fresh ears, until this selfsame day, until ye have brought the oblation of your God. It is a statute forever throughout your generations in all your dwellings" (23:9-14).

Fifty days afterward

"And ye shall count to you from the morrow after the sabbath, from the day that ye brought the sheaf of the wave offering, there shall be complete seven sabbaths. Ye shall number fifty days, even to the morrow after the seventh sabbath, and ye shall offer a new meal offering to Jehovah.

"Ye shall bring out of your habitations two wave-loaves of two tenth parts *of an ephah*. They shall be of fine flour. They shall be baked with leaven, for first-fruits to Jehovah. And ye shall present with the bread seven lambs without blemish a year old, and one young bullock, and two rams. They shall be a burnt offering to Jehovah, with their meal offering, and their drink offerings, even an offering made by fire, of a sweet savor to Jehovah. And ye shall offer one he-goat for a sin offering, and two he-lambs a year old for a sacrifice of peace offerings. And the priest shall wave them with the bread of the first-fruits for a wave offering before Jehovah, with the two lambs. They shall be holy to Jehovah for the priest.

"And ye shall make proclamation on the selfsame day, there shall be a holy convocation to you. Ye shall do no job work. It is a statute forever in all your dwellings throughout your generations" (23:15-21).

That was called the feast of weeks and the feast of harvest. In the New Testament it is called the day of Pentecost.

(Leave some crops at harvest)

"And when ye reap the harvest of your land, thou shall not wholly reap the corners of thy field, neither shall thou gather the gleaning of thy harvest. Thou shall leave them for the poor man, and for the sojourner. I am Jehovah your God" (23:22).

Blowing of trumpets

"And Jehovah spoke to Moses, saying, Speak to the sons of Israel, saying, In the seventh month, on the first day of the month, shall be a solemn rest to you, a memorial of blowing of trumpets, a holy convocation. Ye shall do no job work, and ye shall offer an offering made by fire to Jehovah" (23:23-25).

The day of atonement

"And Jehovah spoke to Moses, saying, However on the tenth day of this seventh month is the day of atonement. It shall be a holy convocation to you, and ye shall afflict your souls, and ye shall offer an offering made by fire to Jehovah. And ye shall do no manner of work in that same day, for it is a day of atonement, to make atonement for you before Jehovah your God.

"For whatever soul it be who shall not be afflicted in that same day, he shall be cut off from his people. And whatever soul it be who does any manner of work in that same day, that soul I will destroy from among his people.

"Ye shall do no manner of work. It is a statute forever throughout your generations in all your dwellings. It shall be to you a sabbath of solemn rest, and ye shall afflict your souls. In the ninth day of the month at evening, from evening to evening, ye shall keep your sabbath" (23:26-32).

The feast of tabernacles

"And Jehovah spoke to Moses, saying, Speak to the sons of Israel, saying, On the fifteenth day of this seventh month is the feast of tabernacles for seven days to Jehovah. On the first day shall be a holy convocation. Ye shall do no job work. Seven days ye shall offer an offering made by fire to Jehovah. On the eighth day shall be a holy convocation to you, and ye shall offer an offering made by fire to Jehovah. It is a solemn assembly; ye shall do no job work" (23: 33-36).

Summary

"These are the set feasts of Jehovah, which ye shall proclaim to be holy convocations, to offer an offering made by fire to Jehovah, a burnt offering, and a meal offering, a sacrifice, and drink offerings, each on its own day. Besides the sabbaths of Jehovah, and besides your gifts, and besides all your vows, and besides all your freewill offerings, which ye give to Jehovah" (23:37-38).

The feast of booths

"However on the fifteenth day of the seventh month, when ye have gathered in the fruits of the land, ye shall keep the feast of Jehovah seven days. On the first day shall be a solemn rest, and on the eighth day shall be a solemn rest. And ye shall take to you on the first day the fruit of goodly trees, branches of palm trees, and boughs of thick trees, and willows of the brook, and ye shall rejoice before Jehovah your God seven days.

"And ye shall keep it a feast to Jehovah seven days in the year. It is a statute forever throughout your generations. Ye shall keep it in the seventh month. Ye shall dwell in booths seven days. All who are home-born in Israel shall dwell in booths, that your generations may know that I made the sons of Israel to dwell in booths, when I brought them out of the land of Egypt. I am Jehovah your God" (23:39-43).

The feast of booths is the same as the feast of tabernacles. Why it is mentioned again here is unclear. It is called by a different name, and it gives information not given in the preceding passage. It seems to be an afterthought clarifying the command about that feast. The case of the daughters of Zelophehad (see Numbers 27 and 36) illustrates how later information is given in the Bible that clarifies commands. God has his own lofty reasons why his Bible reads as it does. Let not scoffers mislead you with their ignorant criticisms. Read the book of Job for examples of ignorant criticism of God and his ways.

Inside the Tabernacle

The light

"And Jehovah spoke to Moses, saying, Command the sons of Israel, that they bring to thee pure beaten olive oil for the light, to cause a lamp to burn continually. Aaron shall keep it outside the veil of the testimony, in the tent of meeting, in order from evening to morning before Jehovah continually. It shall be a statute forever throughout your generations. He shall keep the lamps upon the pure lampstand in order before Jehovah continually" (24:1-4).

The showbread

"And thou shall take fine flour, and bake twelve cakes of it. Two tenth parts *of an ephah* shall be in one cake. And thou shall set them in two rows, six on a row, upon the pure table before Jehovah. And thou shall put pure frankincense upon each row, that it may be on the bread for a memorial, even an offering made by fire to Jehovah. Every sabbath day he shall set it in order before Jehovah continually. It is on the behalf of the sons of Israel, an everlasting covenant. And it shall be for Aaron and his sons. And they shall eat it in a holy place, for it is most holy to him of the offerings of Jehovah made by fire by a perpetual statute" (24:5-9).

Other Laws

Cursing God

Next the book describes the case of a man who **"blasphemed the Name, and cursed."** Jehovah commanded Moses to have all who heard him lay their hands on him, and all the congregation was to stone him. Then he said to Moses, **"And thou shall speak to the sons of Israel, saying, Whoever curses his God shall bear his sin. And he who blasphemes the name of Jehovah, he shall surely be put to death. All the congregation shall certainly stone him. As well the sojourner, as the home-born, when he blasphemes the Name, shall be put to death"** (24:15-16).

Assault

He said further, **"And he who smites any man mortally shall surely be put to death. And he who smites a beast mortally shall make it good, life for life. And if a man causes a blemish in his neighbor, as he has done, so shall it be done to him: injury for injury, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, as he has caused a blemish in a man, so shall it be rendered to him. And he who kills a beast shall make it good. And he who kills a man shall be put to death. Ye shall have one manner of law, as for the sojourner, as for the home-born, for I am Jehovah your God"** (24:17-22).

More Sabbaths

Sabbath of the land

"And Jehovah spoke to Moses at mount Sinai, saying, Speak to the sons of Israel, and say to them, When ye come into the land which I give you, then shall the land keep a sabbath to Jehovah. Six years thou shall sow thy field, and six years thou shall prune thy vineyard, and gather in the fruits of it, but in the seventh year shall be a sabbath of solemn rest for the land, a sabbath to Jehovah.

"Thou shall neither sow thy field, nor prune thy vineyard. That which grows of itself of thy harvest thou shall not reap, and the grapes of thy undressed vine thou shall not gather. It shall be a year of solemn rest for the land. And the sabbath of the land shall be for food for you: for thee, and for thy servant and for thy maid, and for thy hired servant and for thy stranger, who sojourns with thee. And for thy cattle, and for the beasts that are in thy land, all the increase of it shall be for food" (25:1-7).

The jubilee

"And thou shall number seven sabbaths of years to thee, seven times seven years, and there shall be to thee the days of seven sabbaths of years, even forty-nine years. Then thou shall send abroad the loud trumpet on the tenth day of the seventh month. In the day of atonement ye shall send abroad the trumpet throughout all your land. And ye shall hallow the fiftieth year, and proclaim liberty throughout the land to all the inhabitants of it.

"It shall be a jubilee to you, and ye shall return every man to his possession, and ye shall return every man to his family. That fiftieth year shall be a jubilee to you.

"Ye shall not sow, neither reap that which grows of itself in it, nor gather in it of the undressed vines. For it is a jubilee; it shall be holy to you. Ye shall eat the increase of it out of the field" (25:8-12).

"In this year of jubilee ye shall return every man to his possession. And if thou sell anything to thy neighbor, or buy of thy neighbor's hand, ye shall not wrong each other. According to the number of years after the jubilee thou shall buy of thy neighbor, *and* according to the number of years of the crops he shall sell to thee. According to the multitude of the years thou shall increase the price of it, and according to the fewness of the years thou shall diminish the price of it, for the number of the crops he sells to thee" (25:13-16).

(Do right and obey God)

"And ye shall not wrong each other, but thou shall fear thy God, for I am Jehovah your God. Therefore ye shall do my statutes, and keep my ordinances and do them, and ye shall dwell in the land in safety. And the land shall yield its fruit, and ye shall eat your fill, and dwell in safety in it" (25:17-19).

What to eat the sabbath year

"And if ye shall say, What shall we eat the seventh year? Behold, we shall not sow, nor gather in our increase, then I will command my blessing upon you in the sixth year, and it shall bring forth fruit for the three years. And ye shall sow the eighth year, and eat of the fruits, the old storage, until the ninth year. Until its fruits come in, ye shall eat the old storage" (25:20-22).

Redeeming Property

Lands

"And the land shall not be sold in perpetuity, for the land is mine. For ye are strangers and sojourners with me. And in all the land of your possession ye shall grant a redemption for the land.

"If thy brother becomes poor, and sells some of his possession, then his kinsman who is next to him shall come, and shall redeem that which his brother has sold. And if a man has no one to redeem it, and he becomes rich and finds sufficient to redeem it, then let him reckon the years of the sale of it, and restore the excess to the man to whom he sold it, and he shall return to his possession.

"But if he is not able to get it back for himself, then that which he has sold shall remain in the hand of him who has bought it until the year of jubilee. And in the jubilee it shall go out, and he shall return to his possession" (25:23-28).

Houses

"And if a man sells a dwelling-house in a walled city, then he may redeem it within a whole year after it is sold. For a full year he shall have the right of redemption. And if it be not redeemed within the space of a full year, then the house that is in the walled city shall be made sure in perpetuity to him who bought it, throughout his generations. It shall not go out in the jubilee.

"But the houses of the villages which have no wall round about them shall be reckoned with the fields of the country. They may be redeemed, and they shall go out in the jubilee.

"Nevertheless the cities of the Levites, the houses of the cities of their possession, the Levites may redeem at any time. And if a man purchases from the Levites, then the house that was sold, and the city of his possession, shall go out in the jubilee. For the houses of the cities of the Levites are their possession among the sons of Israel. But the field of the suburbs of their cities may not be sold, for it is their perpetual possession" (25:29-34).

The Poor

No interest charges

"And if thy brother becomes poor, and his hand fails with thee, then thou shall uphold him; he shall live with thee *as* a stranger and a sojourner. Take thou no interest from him or increase, but fear thy God, that thy brother may live with thee. Thou shall not give him thy money upon interest, nor give him thy food for profit. I am Jehovah your God, who brought you forth out of the land of Egypt, to give you the land of Canaan, *and* to be your God" (25:35-38).

Selling himself to an Israelite

"And if thy brother becomes poor with thee, and sells himself to thee, thou shall not impose upon him servile labor. He shall be with thee as a hired servant, and as a sojourner. He shall serve with thee to the year of jubilee. Then he shall go out from thee, he and his sons with him, and shall return to his own family. And he shall return to the possession of his fathers. For they are my servants, whom I brought forth out of the land of Egypt. They shall not be sold as bondmen. Thou shall not rule over him with rigor, but shall fear thy God" (25:38-43).

Bondmen

"And as for thy bondmen, and thy bondmaids, whom thou shall have, from the nations that are round about you, ye shall buy bondmen and bondmaids from them. Moreover of the sons of the strangers who sojourn among you, ye shall buy from them, and from their families that are with you, which they have begotten in your land, and they shall be your possession. And ye shall make them an inheritance for your sons after you, to hold for a possession. Ye shall take your permanent bondmen

from them, but over your brothers the sons of Israel ye shall not rule, one over another, with rigor" (25:44-46).

Selling himself to a foreigner in Israel

"And if a stranger or sojourner with thee becomes rich, and thy brother becomes poor beside him, and sells himself to the stranger *or* sojourner with thee, or to the stock of the stranger's family, he may be redeemed after he is sold. One of his brothers may redeem him. Or his uncle, or his uncle's son, may redeem him. Or any who is near of kin to him of his family may redeem him. Or if he becomes rich, he may redeem himself.

"And he shall reckon with him who bought him from the year that he sold himself to him to the year of jubilee. And the price of his sale shall be according to the number of years. He shall be with him according to the time of a hired servant. If there be yet many years, according to them he shall give back the price of his redemption out of the money that he was bought for. And if there remain but few years to the year of jubilee, then he shall reckon with him. He shall give back the price of his redemption according to his years. He shall be with him as a servant hired year by year.

"He shall not rule with rigor over him in thy sight. And if he is not redeemed by these *means*, then he shall go out in the year of jubilee, he, and his sons with him. For the sons of Israel are servants to me. They are my servants whom I brought forth out of the land of Egypt. I am Jehovah your God" (25:47-55).

Other Laws

No idols

"Ye shall make for you no idols. Neither shall ye rear up for you a graven image, or a pillar. Neither shall ye place any figured stone in your land, to bow down to it. For I am Jehovah your God" (26:1).

The sabbaths and the sanctuary

"Ye shall keep my sabbaths, and reverence my sanctuary. I am Jehovah" (26:2).

The Blessings and Curses

The blessings

"If ye walk in my statutes, and keep my commandments, and do them, then I will give your rains in their season, and the land shall yield its increase, and the trees of the field shall yield their fruit. And your threshing shall reach to the vintage, and the vintage shall reach to the sowing time, and ye shall eat your bread to the full, and dwell in your land safely.

"And I will give peace in the land, and ye shall lie down, and none shall make you afraid. And I will cause evil beasts to cease out of the land, nor shall the sword go through your land. And ye shall chase your enemies, and they shall fall before you by

the sword. And five of you shall chase a hundred, and a hundred of you shall chase ten thousand, and your enemies shall fall before you by the sword.

"And I will have respect to you, and make you fruitful, and multiply you, and will establish my covenant with you. And ye shall eat old storage long kept, and ye shall bring forth the old because of the new. And I will set my tabernacle among you, and my soul shall not abhor you. And I will walk among you, and will be your God, and ye shall be my people. I am Jehovah your God, who brought you forth out of the land of Egypt, that ye should not be their bondmen. And I have broken the bars of your yoke, and made you go upright" (26:3-13).

The first curses

"But if ye will not hearken to me, and will not do all these commandments, and if ye shall reject my statutes, and if your soul abhors my ordinances, so that ye will not do all my commandments, but break my covenant, I also will do this to you: I will appoint terror over you, even consumption and fever, that shall consume the eyes, and make the soul to pine away. And ye shall sow your seed in vain, for your enemies shall eat it. And I will set my face against you, and ye shall be smitten before your enemies. Those who hate you shall rule over you, and ye shall flee when no man pursues you" (26:14-17).

More curses

"And if for these things ye will not yet hearken to me, then I will chastise you seven times more for your sins. And I will break the pride of your power. And I will make your sky as iron, and your earth as brass, and your strength shall be spent in vain, for your land shall not yield its increase, nor shall the trees of the land yield their fruit.

"And if ye walk contrary to me, and will not hearken to me, I will bring seven times more plagues upon you according to your sins. And I will send the beast of the field among you, which shall rob you of your sons, and destroy your cattle, and make you few in number, and your ways shall become desolate" (26:18-22).

Yet more curses

"And if by these things ye will not be reformed to me, but will walk contrary to me, then I also will walk contrary to you, and I will smite you, even I, seven times for your sins. And I will bring a sword upon you that shall execute the vengeance of the covenant, and ye shall be gathered together within your cities. And I will send the pestilence among you, and ye shall be delivered into the hand of the enemy. When I break your staff of bread, ten women shall bake your bread in one oven, and they shall deliver your bread again by weight, and ye shall eat, and not be satisfied" (26:23-26).

Yet even more curses

"And if for all this ye will not hearken to me, but walk contrary to me, then I will walk contrary to you in wrath, and I also will chastise you seven times for your sins. And ye shall eat the flesh of your sons, and the flesh of your daughters ye shall eat. And I will destroy your high places, and cut down your sun-images, and cast your dead bodies upon the bodies of your idols, and my soul shall abhor you.

"And I will make your cities a waste, and will bring your sanctuaries to desolation, and I will not smell the savor of your sweet odors. And I will bring the land into desolation, and your enemies who dwell in it shall be astonished at it.

"And I will scatter you among the nations, and I will draw out the sword after you, and your land shall be a desolation, and your cities shall be a waste. Then the land shall enjoy its sabbaths, as long as it lies desolate, and ye are in your enemies' land, even then shall the land rest, and enjoy its sabbaths. As long as it lies desolate it shall have rest, even the rest which it had not in your sabbaths, when ye dwelt upon it" (26:27-35).

Final misery

"And as for those who are left of you, I will send a faintness into their heart in the lands of their enemies. And the sound of a driven leaf shall chase them, and they shall flee as a man flees from the sword, and they shall fall when no man pursues. And they shall stumble one upon another, as it were before the sword, when no man pursues. And ye shall have no power to stand before your enemies.

"And ye shall perish among the nations, and the land of your enemies shall eat you up. And those who are left of you shall pine away in their iniquity in your enemies' lands, and also in the iniquities of their fathers they shall pine away with them" (26:36-39).

When they confess

"And they shall confess their iniquity, and the iniquity of their fathers, in their trespass which they trespassed against me, and also that, because they walked contrary to me, I also walked contrary to them, and brought them into the land of their enemies. If then their uncircumcised heart be humbled, and they then accept of the punishment of their iniquity, then I will remember my covenant with Jacob, and also my covenant with Isaac, and also my covenant with Abraham will I remember, and I will remember the land. The land also shall be left by them, and shall enjoy its sabbaths while it lies desolate without them.

"And they shall accept of the punishment of their iniquity, because, even because they rejected my ordinances, and their soul abhorred my statutes. And yet for all that, when they are in the land of their enemies, I will not reject them, neither will I abhor them, to destroy them utterly, and to break my covenant with them, for I am Jehovah their God, but for their sakes I will remember the covenant of their ances-

tors, whom I brought forth out of the land of Egypt in the sight of the nations, that I might be their God. I am Jehovah" (26:40-45).

More About Redeeming Things

Estimating persons

"And Jehovah spoke to Moses, saying, Speak to the sons of Israel, and say to them, When a man shall accomplish a vow, the persons shall be for Jehovah by thy estimation. And thy estimation shall be of the male from twenty years old even to sixty years old, even thy estimation shall be fifty shekels of silver, after the shekel of the sanctuary. And if it be a female, then thy estimation shall be thirty shekels.

"And if it be from five years old even to twenty years old, then thy estimation shall be of the male twenty shekels, and for the female ten shekels.

"And if it be from a month old even to five years old, then thy estimation shall be of the male five shekels of silver, and for the female thy estimation shall be three shekels of silver.

"And if it be from sixty years old and upward, if it be a male, then thy estimation shall be fifteen shekels, and for the female ten shekels.

"But if he be poorer than thy estimation, then he shall be set before the priest, and the priest shall value him; according to the ability of him who vowed shall the priest value him" (27:1-8).

Beasts

"And if it be a beast, of which men offer an oblation to Jehovah, all that any man gives of such to Jehovah shall be holy. He shall not alter it, nor change it, a good for a bad, or a bad for a good. And if he shall at all change beast for beast, then both it and that for which it is changed shall be holy. And if it be any unclean beast, of which they do not offer an oblation to Jehovah, then he shall set the beast before the priest, and the priest shall value it, whether it be good or bad. As thou the priest values it, so shall it be. But if he will indeed redeem it, then he shall add the fifth part of it to thy estimation" (27:9-13).

Houses

"And when a man shall sanctify his house to be holy to Jehovah, then the priest shall estimate it, whether it be good or bad. As the priest shall estimate it, so shall it stand. And if he who sanctified it will redeem his house, then he shall add the fifth part of the money of thy estimation to it, and it shall be his" (27:14-15).

Fields

"And if a man shall sanctify to Jehovah part of the field of his possession, then thy estimation shall be according to the sowing of it, the sowing of a homer of barley at fifty shekels of silver. If he sanctifies his field from the year of jubilee, according to thy estimation it shall stand. But if he sanctifies his field after the jubilee, then the priest

shall reckon to him the money according to the years that remain to the year of jubilee, and an abatement shall be made from thy estimation.

"And if he who sanctified the field will indeed redeem it, then he shall add the fifth part of the money of thy estimation to it, and it shall be assured to him. And if he will not redeem the field, or if he has sold the field to another man, it shall not be redeemed any more, but the field, when it goes out in the jubilee, shall be holy to Jehovah, as a field set apart; the possession of it shall be the priest's.

"And if he sanctifies to Jehovah a field which he has bought, which is not of the field of his possession, then the priest shall reckon to him the worth of thy estimation to the year of jubilee, and he shall give thine estimation in that day, as a holy thing to Jehovah. In the year of jubilee the field shall return to him of whom it was bought, even to him to whom the possession of the land belongs" (27:16-24).

Use the shekel

"And all thy estimations shall be according to the shekel of the sanctuary; twenty gerahs shall be the shekel" (27:25).

Firstlings among beasts

"Only the firstling among beasts, which is made a firstling to Jehovah, no man shall sanctify it, whether it be ox or sheep, it is Jehovah's. And if it be of an unclean beast, then he shall ransom it according to thine estimation, and shall add to it the fifth part of it, or if it be not redeemed, then it shall be sold according to thy estimation" (27:26-27).

Whatever is set apart

"Notwithstanding, nothing set apart, that a man shall set apart to Jehovah of all that he has, whether of man or beast, or of the field of his possession, shall be sold or redeemed; everything set apart is most holy to Jehovah.

Those set apart from among men

"No one set apart, who shall be set apart from among men, shall be ransomed; he shall surely be put to death" (27:28-29).

The tithe

"And all the tithe of the land, whether of the seed of the land, or of the fruit of the tree, is Jehovah's; it is holy to Jehovah.

"And if a man will redeem any of his tithe, he shall add to it the fifth part of it. And all the tithe of the herd or the flock, whatever passes under the rod, the tenth shall be holy to Jehovah. He shall not search whether it be good or bad, neither shall he change it. And if he changes it at all, then both it and that for which it is changed shall be holy; it shall not be redeemed" (27:31-33).

Part 1:4

LAW IN NUMBERS

SOME HISTORY

The book of Numbers begins with Jehovah's command to Moses that the sons of Israel be numbered. He was to take a count of **"every male, by their polls, from twenty years old and upward, all who are able to go forth to war in Israel"** (1:2). He also said, **"Thou and Aaron shall number them by their armies"** (1:3). Remember, they were called armies because they were on their way to invade and conquer their promised land. Also the head of each tribe was to help them. The sum of each tribe is given, and the total was 603,550. However, the Levites were not numbered. Moses was to appoint them over the tabernacle and everything that belonged with it. Israel was also to encamp and travel in an organized fashion like an army. The tabernacle was to be in the center, surrounded by the Levites. Three tribes were to camp to the east of it, three to the south, three to the west, and three to the north. And they were to march in order by those groups with the levites and the tabernacle in the middle of the procession.

Next the male Levites were numbered according to their three families, the progeny of the three sons of Levi. Jehovah said to Moses, **"And I, behold, I have taken the Levites from among the sons of Israel instead of all the firstborn who opens the womb among the sons of Israel"** (3:12). God had changed his mind when the sons of Israel sinned with the golden calf. The families of the Levites were numbered, and they were assigned different parts of the tabernacle to carry on their marches. The age of their service was from thirty to fifty years old. Other details about them are given in the text.

Then Jehovah said to Moses, **"Command the sons of Israel, that they put out of the camp every leper, and every man who has an issue, and whoever is unclean about life. Ye shall put out both male and female. Ye shall put them outside the camp, that they not defile their camp, in the midst of which I dwell"** (5:2-3). That was to prevent spreading disease. Those people were not abandoned or neglected, because God had commanded his people to care for each other, especially for the needy. Putting them out of the camp was a kind of quarantine. God made great emphasis on cleanliness for his people, both spiritual and physical. Our uncleanness separates us from him. Therefore, we should strive for cleanliness (as God defines it) in all things.

THE TRESPASS OFFERING

After describing the census more laws are given. Jehovah said to Moses, **"Speak to the sons of Israel, When a man or woman shall commit any sin that men commit, so as to trespass against Jehovah, and that soul shall be guilty, then he shall confess his sin which he has done. And he shall make restitution for his guilt in full, and add to it the fifth part of it, and give it to him in respect of whom he has been guilty. But if the man has no kinsman to whom restitution may be made for the guilt, the restitution for guilt**

which is made to Jehovah shall be the priest's, besides the ram of the atonement, by which atonement shall be made for him. And every heave offering of all the holy things of the sons of Israel, which they present to the priest, shall be his. And every man's hallowed things shall be his. Whatever any man gives the priest, it shall be his" (5:5-10).

The Law of Jealousy

A husband's accusation

"If any man's wife goes aside, and commits a trespass against him, and a man lies with her carnally, and it be hid from the eyes of her husband, and be kept close, and she be defiled, and there be no witness against her, and she is not taken in the act, and the spirit of jealousy comes upon him, and he be jealous of his wife, and she be defiled, or if the spirit of jealousy comes upon him, and he be jealous of his wife, and she is not defiled, then the man shall bring his wife to the priest, and shall bring her oblation for her, the tenth part of an ephah of barley meal. He shall pour no oil upon it, nor put frankincense on it, for it is a meal offering of jealousy, a meal offering of memorial, bringing iniquity to remembrance" (5:12-15).

Uttering the curse

"And the priest shall bring her near, and set her before Jehovah. And the priest shall take holy water in an earthen vessel. And the priest shall take of the dust that is on the floor of the tabernacle, and put it into the water. And the priest shall set the woman before Jehovah, and let the hair of the woman's head go loose, and put the meal offering of memorial in her hands, which is the meal offering of jealousy. And the priest shall have in his hand the water of bitterness that causes the curse.

"And the priest shall cause her to swear, and shall say to the woman, If no man has lain with thee, and if thou have not gone aside to uncleanness, being under thy husband, be thou free from this water of bitterness that causes the curse. But if thou have gone aside, being under thy husband, and if thou are defiled, and some man has lain with thee besides thy husband, then the priest shall cause the woman to swear with the oath of cursing, and the priest shall say to the woman, Jehovah make thee a curse and an oath among thy people when Jehovah makes thy thigh to fall away, and thy body to swell. And this water that causes the curse shall go into thy bowels, and make thy body to swell, and thy thigh to fall away. And the woman shall say, Truly, Truly" (5:16-22).

The water of bitterness

"And the priest shall write these curses in a book, and he shall blot them out into the water of bitterness. And he shall make the woman drink the water of bitterness that causes the curse. And the water that causes the curse shall enter into her bitter. And the priest shall take the meal offering of jealousy out of the woman's hand, and shall wave the meal offering before Jehovah, and bring it to the altar. And the priest shall

take a handful of the meal offering, as the memorial of it, and burn it upon the altar, and afterward shall make the woman drink the water" (5:23-26).

Guilty or innocent

"And when he has made her drink the water, then it shall come to pass, if she is defiled, and has committed a trespass against her husband, that the water that causes the curse shall enter into her bitter, and her body shall swell, and her thigh shall fall away. And the woman shall be a curse among her people.

"And if the woman is not defiled, but is clean, then she shall be free, and shall conceive seed. This is the law of jealousy, when a wife, being under her husband, goes aside, and is defiled, or when the spirit of jealousy comes upon a man, and he is jealous of his wife. Then he shall set the woman before Jehovah, and the priest shall execute upon her all this law. And the man shall be free from iniquity, and that woman shall bear her iniquity" (5:27-31).

Vow of the Nazirite

Requirements

"And Jehovah spoke to Moses, saying, Speak to the sons of Israel, and say to them, When either man or woman shall make a special vow, the vow of a Nazirite, to separate himself to Jehovah, he shall separate himself from wine and strong drink. He shall drink no vinegar of wine, or vinegar of strong drink, neither shall he drink any juice of grapes, nor eat fresh grapes or dried. All the days of his separation he shall eat nothing that is made of the grapevine, from the kernels even to the husk.

"All the days of his vow of separation there shall no razor come upon his head. Until the days be fulfilled, in which he separates himself to Jehovah, he shall be holy. He shall let the locks of the hair of his head grow long.

"He shall not come near to a dead body all the days that he separates himself to Jehovah. He shall not make himself unclean for his father, or for his mother, for his brother, or for his sister, when they die, because his separation to God is upon his head. All the days of his separation he is holy to Jehovah" (6:1-8).

If he becomes defiled

"And if any man dies very suddenly beside him, and he defiles the head of his separation, then he shall shave his head in the day of his cleansing; on the seventh day he shall shave it. And on the eighth day he shall bring two turtle-doves, or two young pigeons to the priest, to the door of the tent of meeting.

"And the priest shall offer one for a sin offering, and the other for a burnt offering, and make atonement for him, because he sinned by reason of the dead, and shall hallow his head that same day. And he shall separate to Jehovah the days of his separation, and shall bring a he-lamb a year old for a trespass offering. But the former days shall be void, because his separation was defiled" (6:9-12).

The offerings afterward

"And this is the law of the Nazirite when the days of his separation are fulfilled: He shall be brought to the door of the tent of meeting, and he shall offer his oblation to Jehovah: one he-lamb a year old without blemish for a burnt offering, and one ewe-lamb a year old without blemish for a sin offering, and one ram without blemish for peace offerings, and a basket of unleavened bread, cakes of fine flour mingled with oil, and unleavened wafers anointed with oil, and their meal offering, and their drink offerings.

"And the priest shall present them before Jehovah, and shall offer his sin offering, and his burnt offering. And he shall offer the ram for a sacrifice of peace offerings to Jehovah, with the basket of unleavened bread. The priest shall also offer the meal offering of it, and the drink offering of it.

"And the Nazirite shall shave the head of his separation at the door of the tent of meeting, and shall take the hair of the head of his separation, and put it on the fire which is under the sacrifice of peace offerings. And the priest shall take the boiled shoulder of the ram, and one unleavened cake out of the basket, and one unleavened wafer, and shall put them upon the hands of the Nazirite, after he has shaven his separation, and the priest shall wave them for a wave offering before Jehovah. This is holy for the priest, together with the wave-breast and heave-thigh.

"And after that the Nazirite may drink wine. This is the law of the Nazirite who vows, *and of* his oblation to Jehovah for his separation, besides that which he is able to get. According to his vow which he vows, so he must do after the law of his separation" (6:13-21).

The Priest's Blessing

"And Jehovah spoke to Moses, saying, Speak to Aaron and to his sons, saying, This way ye shall bless the sons of Israel: Ye shall say to them, Jehovah bless thee, and keep thee. Jehovah make his face to shine upon thee, and be gracious to thee. Jehovah lift up his countenance upon thee, and give thee peace. So shall they put my name upon the sons of Israel, and I will bless them" (6:23-27).

More History

Then the text describes gifts of wagons and oxen that the rulers of each tribe contributed. They were given to the Levites to help carry the tabernacle, but not its furniture. The furniture was always to be carried by hand. Each of the twelve rulers also offered an oblation of twenty-one animals, one silver platter and one silver bowl, both of which were full of fine flour and oil, and one golden spoon full of incense. They all offered the same kinds of things. And each one offered on a different day for twelve successive days. That was for the dedication of the altar after it was anointed. Then the text says, **"And when Moses went into the tent of meeting to speak with him, then he heard the Voice speaking to him**

from above the mercy-seat that was upon the ark of the testimony, from between the two cherubim, and he spoke to him" (7:89).

The Tabernacle Lamps

Then the text says, **"And Jehovah spoke to Moses, saying, Speak to Aaron, and say to him, When thou light the lamps, the seven lamps shall give light in front of the lampstand. And Aaron did so. He lit the lamps of it in front of the lampstand, as Jehovah commanded Moses. And this was the work of the lampstand, beaten work of gold. To the base of it, *and* to the flowers of it, it was beaten work. According to the pattern which Jehovah had shown Moses, so he made the lampstand"** (8:2-4).

The Levites

Presenting them

"And Jehovah spoke to Moses, saying, Take the Levites from among the sons of Israel, and cleanse them. And thus thou shall do to them to cleanse them: sprinkle the water of expiation upon them, and let them cause a razor to pass over all their flesh, and let them wash their clothes, and cleanse themselves.

"Then let them take a young bullock, and its meal offering—fine flour mingled with oil. And thou shall take another young bullock for a sin offering. And thou shall present the Levites before the tent of meeting.

"And thou shall assemble the whole congregation of the sons of Israel, and thou shall present the Levites before Jehovah. And the sons of Israel shall lay their hands upon the Levites. And Aaron shall offer the Levites before Jehovah for a wave offering on the behalf of the sons of Israel, that it may be theirs to do the service of Jehovah.

"And the Levites shall lay their hands upon the heads of the bullocks, and offer thou the one for a sin offering, and the other for a burnt offering, to Jehovah, to make atonement for the Levites. And thou shall set the Levites before Aaron, and before his sons, and offer them for a wave offering to Jehovah" (8:5-13).

Chosen instead of the firstborn

"Thus shall thou separate the Levites from among the sons of Israel, and the Levites shall be mine. And after that the Levites shall go in to do the service of the tent of meeting. And thou shall cleanse them, and offer them for a wave offering.

"For they are wholly given to me from among the sons of Israel; instead of all who open the womb, even the firstborn of all the sons of Israel, I have taken them to me. For all the firstborn among the sons of Israel are mine, both man and beast. On the day that I smote all the firstborn in the land of Egypt I sanctified them for myself.

"And I have taken the Levites instead of all the firstborn among the sons of Israel. And I have given the Levites as a gift to Aaron and to his sons from among the sons of Israel, to do the service of the sons of Israel in the tent of meeting, and to make

atonement for the sons of Israel, that there be no plague among the sons of Israel, when the sons of Israel come near to the sanctuary" (8:14-19). And they all obeyed.

The age of their service

"And Jehovah spoke to Moses, saying, This is that which belongs to the Levites: From twenty-five years old and upward they shall go in to wait upon the service in the work of the tent of meeting. And from the age of fifty years they shall cease waiting upon the work, and shall serve no more, but shall minister with their brothers in the tent of meeting, to keep the charge, and shall do no service. Thus shall thou do to the Levites concerning their charges" (8:23-26). The text said earlier their service was to be from thirty to fifty years of age. I comment about that difference in Part 2:5.

When Anyone Missed the Passover

After that Jehovah told Moses to command the sons of Israel to keep the Passover, and they obeyed. However, the text says there were certain men who were unclean because of the dead body of a man, and so they could not keep the Passover on the scheduled day. When they told Moses, he inquired of Jehovah, who then gave the following command:

"Speak to the sons of Israel, saying, If any man of you or of your generations shall be unclean by reason of a dead body, or be on a journey afar off, yet he shall keep the Passover to Jehovah. In the second month on the fourteenth day at evening they shall keep it. They shall eat it with unleavened bread and bitter herbs. They shall leave none of it to the morning, nor break a bone of it. According to all the statute of the Passover they shall keep it.

"But the man who is clean, and is not on a journey, and forbears to keep the Passover, that soul shall be cut off from his people, because he did not offer the oblation of Jehovah in its appointed season; that man shall bear his sin.

"And if a stranger shall sojourn among you, and will keep the Passover to Jehovah, according to the statute of the Passover, and according to the ordinance of it, so shall he do. Ye shall have one statute, both for the sojourner, and for him who is born in the land" (9:10-14).

The Two Trumpets

After that the text describes how the pillar of cloud determined when and where they traveled. Then Jehovah said to Moses, **"Make thee two trumpets of silver, of beaten work thou shall make them. And thou shall use them for the calling of the congregation, and for the journeying of the camps.**

"And when they shall blow them, all the congregation shall gather themselves to thee at the door of the tent of meeting. And if they blow but one, then the rulers, the heads of the thousands of Israel, shall gather themselves to thee.

"And when ye blow an alarm, the camps that lie on the east side shall take their journey. And when ye blow an alarm the second time, the camps that lie on the south side

shall take their journey. They shall blow an alarm for their journeys. But when the assembly is to be gathered together, ye shall blow, but ye shall not sound an alarm. And the sons of Aaron, the priests, shall blow the trumpets, and they shall be to you for a statute forever throughout your generations.

"And when ye go to war in your land against the adversary that oppresses you, then ye shall sound an alarm with the trumpets. And ye shall be remembered before Jehovah your God, and ye shall be saved from your enemies.

"Also in the day of your gladness, and in your set feasts, and in the beginnings of your months, ye shall blow the trumpets over your burnt offerings, and over the sacrifices of your peace offerings. And they shall be to you for a memorial before your God: I am Jehovah your God" (10:2-10).

More History

Next the book says the cloud was taken up the twentieth day of the second month of the second year, and they began to journey. Each tribe proceeded in order according to the commands God had given them. And the names of their heads are given. They traveled three days, and the ark went before them. However, many of them began to murmur evil in the ears of Jehovah, and he sent fire among them that devoured the outermost part of the camp. The text says, **"And the people cried to Moses. And Moses prayed to Jehovah, and the fire abated"** (11:2).

After that it says, **"And the mixed multitude that was among them lusted exceedingly. And the sons of Israel also wept again, and said, Who shall give us flesh to eat? We remember the fish which we ate in Egypt for nothing, the cucumbers, and the melons, and the leeks, and the onions, and the garlic, but now our soul is dried away. There is nothing at all except this manna to look upon"** (11:6). They so frustrated Moses that he pleaded with Jehovah for help. Jehovah told Moses to gather seventy elders, and God enabled them to help Moses.

Then Jehovah said he would bring flesh to the people for a whole month, so much that it would come out their nostrils and become loathsome to them. Moses wondered how God could do it, but Jehovah said, **"Is Jehovah's hand grown short? Now thou shall see whether my word shall come to pass to thee or not"** (11:23). After enabling the seventy men, God caused a wind to bring quails from the sea, and they fell in the camp in huge numbers. However, when the people began to eat he smote them with a very great plague and many died.

Sometime after that Miriam and Aaron criticized Moses about a Cushite woman he had married. They also said to him, **"Has Jehovah indeed spoken only with Moses? Has he not spoken also with us?"** (12:2). Moses apparently did not try to defend himself, for the text says, **"Now the man Moses was very meek, above all the men who were upon the face of the earth"** (12:3). Nevertheless, Jehovah was angry about it, and he told them to come to the tent of meeting. There in the cloud he said to them, **"Hear now my words. If there be a prophet among you, I Jehovah will make myself known to him in a vision.**

I will speak with him in a dream. My servant Moses is not so. He is faithful in all my house. With him I will speak mouth to mouth, even manifestly, and not in dark speeches, and he shall behold the form of Jehovah. Why then were ye not afraid to speak against my servant, against Moses?" (12:6-8). And he struck Miriam with leprosy. When Aaron saw it he confessed their sin and pleaded with Moses. So Moses pleaded with God, who replied, **"If her father had but spit in her face, should she not be ashamed seven days? Let her be shut up outside the camp seven days, and after that she shall be brought in again"** (12:14).

Afterward the text tells how they sent twelve spies, one from each tribe, into the land of Canaan. They were to examine the land, and see what kind of people were there. After forty days they returned. They said the land flowed with milk and honey, but the people were strong and their cities were heavily fortified. Ten of the spies said they could not defeat them. They said, **"And we saw there the giants, the sons of Anak, who come of the giants. And we were in our own sight as grasshoppers, and so we were in their sight"** (13:33). The people then cried out and wept that night. The next day they condemned Moses, Aaron, and Jehovah. And they spoke of making a captain who would take them back to Egypt. However Joshua and Caleb, two of the spies, urged the people not to rebel against Jehovah, because those peoples would be defenseless before him. Nevertheless, the congregation wanted to stone them: **"But all the congregation bade stone them with stones. And the glory of Jehovah appeared in the tent of meeting to all the sons of Israel"** (14:10).

Jehovah then said to Moses, **"How long will this people despise me? And how long will they not believe in me, for all the signs which I have wrought among them?"** (14:11). He told Moses he would destroy them and make of him a nation greater and mightier than they. However, Moses pleaded for God to be merciful and spare them. Jehovah said he would pardon them, but they would die in the wilderness and never enter the promised land, all but Joshua and Caleb. And he told Moses to lead the people back into the wilderness by way of the Red Sea. They would wander and die there, but God would lead their little ones forty years later into the promised land. Also the ten spies who brought the evil report soon died of a plague. When the people heard what Jehovah said, they mourned, repented, and wanted to invade immediately. Moses said that would further transgress against God, but they tried anyway and were thoroughly defeated. After that the text gives more laws.

Meal Offerings

With a lamb

"And Jehovah spoke to Moses, saying, Speak to the sons of Israel, and say to them, When ye come into the land of your habitations, which I give to you, and will make an offering by fire to Jehovah, a burnt offering, or a sacrifice, to accomplish a vow, or as a freewill offering, or in your set feasts, to make a sweet savor to Jehovah, of the herd, or of the flock, then he who offers his oblation shall offer to Jehovah a meal offering of a tenth part *of an ephah* of fine flour mingled with the fourth part of a hin

of oil. And wine for the drink offering, the fourth part of a hin, thou shall prepare with the burnt offering, or for the sacrifice, for each lamb" (15:1-5).

With a ram

"Or for a ram, thou shall prepare for a meal offering two tenth parts *of an ephah* of fine flour mingled with the third part of a hin of oil. And for the drink offering thou shall offer the third part of a hin of wine, of a sweet savor to Jehovah" (15:6-7).

With a bullock

"And when thou prepare a bullock for a burnt offering, or for a sacrifice, to accomplish a vow, or for peace offerings to Jehovah; then he shall offer with the bullock a meal offering of three tenth parts *of an ephah* of fine flour mingled with half a hin of oil. And thou shall offer for the drink offering half a hin of wine, for an offering made by fire, of a sweet savor to Jehovah" (15:8-11).

Summary

"Thus shall it be done for each bullock, or for each ram, or for each of the he-lambs, or of the kids. According to the number that ye shall prepare, so shall ye do to every one according to their number" (15:12).

More Laws

One law for everyone

"All who are home-born shall do these things after this manner, in offering an offering made by fire, of a sweet savor to Jehovah. And if a stranger sojourns with you, or whoever may be among you throughout your generations, and will offer an offering made by fire, of a sweet savor to Jehovah; as ye do, so he shall do. For the assembly, there shall be one statute for you, and for the stranger who sojourns *with you*, a statute forever throughout your generations. As ye are, so shall the sojourner be before Jehovah. One law and one ordinance shall be for you, and for the stranger who sojourns with you" (15:13-16).

The first of the dough

"And Jehovah spoke to Moses, saying, Speak to the sons of Israel, and say to them, When ye come into the land where I bring you, then it shall be, that, when ye eat of the bread of the land, ye shall offer up a heave offering to Jehovah. Of the first of your dough ye shall offer up a cake for a heave offering, as the heave offering of the threshing-floor, so shall ye heave it. Of the first of your dough ye shall give to Jehovah a heave offering throughout your generations" (15:17-21).

Unwitting Sins

By the congregation

"And when ye shall err, and not observe all these commandments, which Jehovah has spoken to Moses, even all that Jehovah has commanded you by Moses, from the

day that Jehovah gave commandment, and onward throughout your generations, then it shall be, if it be done unwittingly, without the knowledge of the congregation, that all the congregation shall offer one young bullock for a burnt offering, for a sweet savor to Jehovah, with the meal offering of it, and the drink offering of it, according to the ordinance, and one he-goat for a sin offering.

"And the priest shall make atonement for all the congregation of the sons of Israel, and they shall be forgiven, for it was an error, and they have brought their oblation, an offering made by fire to Jehovah, and their sin offering before Jehovah, for their error. And all the congregation of the sons of Israel shall be forgiven, and the stranger who sojourns among them, for in respect of all the people it was done unwittingly" (15:22-26).

By one soul

"And if one soul sins unwittingly, then he shall offer a she-goat a year old for a sin offering. And the priest shall make atonement for the soul that errs, when he sins unwittingly, before Jehovah, to make atonement for him, and he shall be forgiven" (15:27-28).

One law for everyone

"Ye shall have one law for him who does anything unwittingly, for him who is home-born among the sons of Israel, and for the stranger who sojourns among them" (15:29).

More Laws

Sinning with a high hand

"But the soul that does anything with a high hand, whether he be home-born or a sojourner, the same blasphemes Jehovah, and that soul shall be cut off from among his people. Because he has despised the word of Jehovah, and has broken his commandment, that soul shall utterly be cut off; his iniquity shall be upon him" (15:30-31).

Hems on the garments

"And Jehovah spoke to Moses, saying, Speak to the sons of Israel, and bid them that they make for them hems in the borders of their garments throughout their generations, and that they put upon the hem of each border a cord of blue. And it shall be to you for a hem, that ye may look upon it, and remember all the commandments of Jehovah, and do them, and that ye not follow after your own heart and your own eyes, after which ye use to play the harlot, that ye may remember and do all my commandments, and be holy to your God. I am Jehovah your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, to be your God. I am Jehovah your God" (15:38-41).

More History

The record tells how they stoned a man who had been gathering sticks on the sabbath. Later there was another rebellion, this one led by a man named Korah. He and 250 rulers, men of

renown, united against Moses and Aaron. They wanted the same privileges as Aaron. So Moses commanded them to bring censers and offer incense to see who Jehovah would choose. After they did so Moses warned the people to separate from the tent of Korah, and also from two other men of the rebels who refused to come at his summons. He said the earth was going to swallow them up, and so the people withdrew. Then the earth opened, swallowed the three men, with all they had, and closed back up again. The people fled in fear, and fire came forth from Jehovah devouring the 250 rebels who offered incense.

The next day the people murmured against Moses and Aaron, saying, **"Ye have killed the people of Jehovah"** (16:41). Jehovah had earlier told Moses he was going to devour the whole congregation, but Moses again pleaded to spare them. The people had not rallied to Moses and Aaron during the rebellion, and afterward the people blamed them for the death of the rebels. Those 250 rulers were called men of renown, and they must have been popular and held in higher esteem than Moses, because he was never popular with them. As the Christian martyr Stephen told the rulers of the Jews, **"Which of the prophets did your fathers not persecute?"** (Acts 7:52). The Israelites of the Exodus were especially wretched, but God restrained his full wrath. Nevertheless, he sent a plague among them, which Aaron was able to stop by offering incense with his censer, but not before 14,700 perished.

After that Jehovah told Moses to command the rulers of the twelve tribes to bring twelve rods, each with his name on it. Moses was to write Aaron's name on his. He was to place them all in the tent before the testimony, the ark of the covenant. He said the rod of the man he chose would bud. The text says that on the morrow **"the rod of Aaron for the house of Levi was budded, and put forth buds, and produced blossoms, and bore ripe almonds"** (17:8). Jehovah then commanded Moses to put Aaron's rod back before the testimony to be kept. Jehovah said it was **"for a sign against the sons of rebellion, that thou may make an end of their murmurings against me, that they not die"** (17:10).

THE PRIESTS

Their role

After that plague the sons of Israel told Moses every man who comes near the tabernacle of Jehovah dies. And they asked if they were all going to perish. Therefore, Jehovah said to Aaron, **"Thou and thy sons and thy fathers' house with thee shall bear the iniquity of the sanctuary, and thou and thy sons with thee shall bear the iniquity of your priesthood. And thy brothers also, the tribe of Levi, the tribe of thy father, bring thou near with thee, that they may be joined to thee, and minister to thee, but thou and thy sons with thee shall be before the tent of the testimony. And they shall keep thy charge, and the charge of all the tent. Only they shall not come near to the vessels of the sanctuary and to the altar, that they not die, neither they, nor ye.**

"And they shall be joined to thee, and keep the charge of the tent of meeting, for all the service of the tent, and a stranger shall not come near to you. And ye shall keep the charge of the sanctuary, and the charge of the altar, that there be no more wrath upon the sons of Israel.

"And I, behold, I have taken your brothers the Levites from among the sons of Israel. They are a gift to you, given to Jehovah, to do the service of the tent of meeting. And thou and thy sons with thee shall keep your priesthood for everything of the altar, and for that within the veil, and ye shall serve. I give you the priesthood as a service of gift. And the stranger who comes near shall be put to death" (18:1-7).

Their wages

Of the offerings

"And Jehovah spoke to Aaron, And I, behold, I have given thee the charge of my heave offerings, even all the hallowed things of the sons of Israel. I have given them to thee by reason of the anointing, and to thy sons, as a portion forever. This shall be thine of the most holy things, *reserved* from the fire: every oblation of theirs, even every meal offering of theirs, and every sin offering of theirs, and every trespass offering of theirs, which they shall render to me, shall be most holy for thee and for thy sons. As the most holy things thou shall eat of it; every male shall eat of it. It shall be holy to thee. And this is thine: the heave offering of their gift, even all the wave offerings of the sons of Israel. I have given them to thee, and to thy sons and to thy daughters with thee, as a portion forever. Everyone who is clean in thy house shall eat of it" (18:1-11).

The first-fruits

"All the best of the oil, and all the best of the vintage, and of the grain, the first-fruits of them which they give to Jehovah, I have given them to thee. The first-ripe fruits of all that is in their land, which they bring to Jehovah, shall be thine. Everyone who is clean in thy house shall eat of it" (18:12-13).

Everything devoted

"Everything devoted in Israel shall be thine. Everything that opens the womb, of all flesh which they offer to Jehovah, both of man and beast shall be thine.

"Nevertheless the firstborn of man thou shall surely redeem, and the firstling of unclean beasts thou shall redeem. And those that are to be redeemed of them from a month old shall thou redeem, according to thine estimation, for the money of five shekels, according to the shekel of the sanctuary (same is twenty gerahs).

"But the firstling of an ox, or the firstling of a sheep, or the firstling of a goat, thou shall not redeem. They are holy. Thou shall sprinkle their blood upon the altar, and shall burn their fat for an offering made by fire, for a sweet savor to Jehovah. And the flesh of them shall be thine. As the wave-breast and as the right thigh, it shall be thine.

"All the heave offerings of the holy things, which the sons of Israel offer to Jehovah, I have given thee, and thy sons and thy daughters with thee, as a portion forever. It is a covenant of salt forever before Jehovah to thee and to thy seed with thee" (18:14-19).

No territory

"And Jehovah said to Aaron, Thou shall have no inheritance in their land, neither shall thou have any portion among them. I am thy portion and thine inheritance among the sons of Israel" (18:20).

The tithe

"And to the sons of Levi, behold, I have given all the tithe in Israel for an inheritance, in return for their service which they serve, even the service of the tent of meeting. And henceforth the sons of Israel shall not come near the tent of meeting, lest they bear sin, and die. But the Levites shall do the service of the tent of meeting, and they shall bear their iniquity.

"It shall be a statute forever throughout your generations. And among the sons of Israel they shall have no inheritance. For the tithe of the sons of Israel, which they offer as a heave offering to Jehovah, I have given to the Levites for an inheritance. Therefore I have said to them, Among the sons of Israel they shall have no inheritance" (18:21-24).

The tithe of the tithe

"And Jehovah spoke to Moses, saying, Moreover thou shall speak to the Levites, and say to them, When ye take from the sons of Israel the tithe which I have given you from them for your inheritance, then ye shall offer up a heave offering of it for Jehovah, a tithe of the tithe. And your heave offering shall be reckoned to you, as though it were the grain of the threshing-floor, and as the fullness of the wine-press.

"Thus ye also shall offer a heave offering to Jehovah of all your tithes, which ye receive of the sons of Israel. And from it ye shall give Jehovah's heave offering to Aaron the priest. Out of all your gifts ye shall offer every heave offering of Jehovah, of all the best of it, even the hallowed part of it out of it. Therefore thou shall say to them, When ye heave the best of it from it, then it shall be reckoned to the Levites as the increase of the threshing-floor, and as the increase of the wine-press.

"And ye shall eat it in every place, ye and your households, for it is your reward in return for your service in the tent of meeting. And ye shall bear no sin by reason of it, when ye have heaved from it the best of it. And ye shall not profane the holy things of the sons of Israel, that ye not die" (18:25-32).

Water of Impurity

Burn a red heifer

"And Jehovah spoke to Moses and to Aaron, saying, This is the statute of the law which Jehovah has commanded, saying, Speak to the sons of Israel, that they bring thee a red heifer without spot, in which is no blemish, *and* upon which a yoke never

came. And ye shall give her to Eleazar the priest, and he shall bring her forth outside the camp, and she shall be killed before his face.

"And Eleazar the priest [Aaron had died] **shall take of her blood with his finger, and sprinkle her blood toward the front of the tent of meeting seven times. And the heifer shall be burned in his sight: her skin, and her flesh, and her blood, with her dung, he shall burn. And the priest shall take cedar-wood, and hyssop, and scarlet, and cast it into the midst of the burning of the heifer"** (19:1-6).

Bathe and relocate the ashes

"Then the priest shall wash his clothes, and he shall bathe his flesh in water. And afterward he shall come into the camp, and the priest shall be unclean until the evening. And he who burned her shall wash his clothes in water, and bathe his flesh in water, and shall be unclean until the evening. And a man who is clean shall gather up the ashes of the heifer, and lay them up outside the camp in a clean place" (19:7-9).

The ashes in water

"And it shall be kept for the congregation of the sons of Israel for a water for impurity. It is a sin offering. And he who gathers the ashes of the heifer shall wash his clothes, and be unclean until the evening. And it shall be to the sons of Israel, and to the stranger who sojourns among them, for a statute forever.

"He who touches the dead body of any man shall be unclean seven days. The same shall purify himself with it on the third day, and on the seventh day he shall be clean, but if he does not purify himself the third day, then the seventh day he shall not be clean. Whoever touches a dead person, the body of a man who has died, and does not purify himself, defiles the tabernacle of Jehovah. And that soul shall be cut off from Israel, because the water for impurity was not sprinkled upon him. He shall be unclean; his uncleanness is yet upon him" (19:10-13).

Cleansing with the water

"This is the law when a man dies in a tent: everyone who comes into the tent, and everyone who is in the tent, shall be unclean seven days. And every open vessel, which has no covering bound upon it, is unclean. And whoever in the open field touches a man who is slain with a sword, or a dead body, or a bone of a man, or a grave, shall be unclean seven days.

"And for the unclean they shall take of the ashes of the burning of the sin offering, and running water shall be put with that in a vessel. And a clean man shall take hyssop, and dip it in the water, and sprinkle it upon the tent, and upon all the vessels, and upon the souls who were there, and upon him who touched the bone, or the slain, or the dead, or the grave. And the clean man shall sprinkle upon the unclean on the third day, and on the seventh day. And on the seventh day he shall purify him. And he shall wash his clothes, and bathe himself in water, and shall be clean at evening.

"But the man who shall be unclean, and shall not purify himself, that soul shall be cut off from the midst of the assembly, because he has defiled the sanctuary of Jehovah. The water for impurity has not been sprinkled upon him; he is unclean. And it shall be a perpetual statute to them. And he who sprinkles the water for impurity shall wash his clothes, and he who touches the water for impurity shall be unclean until evening. And whatever the unclean man touches shall be unclean, and the soul who touches it shall be unclean until evening" (19:14-22).

More History

The record next says Miriam died and was buried. Then it tells of another time the people murmured and complained bitterly against Moses and Aaron. They said there was no water, and they wanted to know why he brought them out of Egypt to what they called "this evil place." Moses and Aaron went to the door of the tent of meeting and fell on their faces. Jehovah told Moses to take his rod, assemble the congregation, and he and Aaron were to speak to the rock that it bring forth water. However, instead of speaking to the rock, Moses, completely out of character, rebuked the people, asking them if "we" should bring water from the rock, and then he struck it. Jehovah brought forth water, but he said to Moses and Aaron, **"Because ye did not believe in me, to sanctify me in the eyes of the sons of Israel, therefore ye shall not bring this assembly into the land which I have given them"** (20:12).

Next the book says Moses requested permission from the king of Edom to pass through their land, but he refused. The Edomites were the sons of Esau, Jacob's brother. After that God told Moses and Aaron that it was time for Aaron to die. They were to go to the top of a mountain, and Moses was to strip Aaron of his garments and give them to his son. Aaron died there and the congregation wept for him thirty days.

After that a king of Canaan fought against Israel. The people vowed that if Jehovah would give them victory they would utterly destroy their cities. He did, therefore they did. Later, however, the people again spoke against God and Moses, complaining about having no bread and water. They said their soul loathed "this light bread," which was the manna. Jehovah sent fiery serpents against them, and many died from their bites. When the people confessed their sin, and asked Jehovah to remove the serpents, Moses prayed for them. Jehovah told him to make a fiery serpent (made of brass), set it on a standard, and all who looked upon it when bitten would live.

After more travels Israel sent messengers to the king of the Amorites (sons of Lot), asking permission to pass through their land. However, he refused and fought with Israel. He was defeated and Israel took all his land.They also took cities from the Amorites and took their land. The record says that after continuing their journey Balak king of Moab feared them greatly. So he sent for the prophet Balaam to curse them. He said to him, **"Come now therefore, I pray thee, curse for me this people, for they are too mighty for me. Perhaps I shall prevail, that we may smite them, and that I may drive them out of the land. For I know that he whom thou bless is blessed, and he whom thou curse is**

cursed" (22:6). The elders of Moab came to him with rewards and made their request, but Jehovah told Balaam not to go.

When Balak was told that Balaam would not go, he sent greater rewards to persuade him. When Balaam asked God again he told him to go, but only say what he told him. On the way Balaam's donkey gave him much trouble and he beat her. God caused the donkey to speak to Balaam in her defense. For an agent of Jehovah with a drawn sword had been blocking the way. When God opened Balaam's eyes he saw the agent, who then told him to speak only what God told him. Balak took Balaam to three different places overlooking the camp of the Israelites. At each place he built altars, and offered sacrifices of oxen and sheep. Nevertheless, Balaam blessed Israel instead of cursing them. The third time aroused Balak's anger, but Balaam reminded him he could not curse Israel. Then he prophesied about the victories of Israel and blessed them a fourth time. After that he returned to his place.

However, the daughters of Moab lured the sons of Israel to play the harlot with them and worship their gods. Therefore, Jehovah was angered and he commanded Moses to kill all the chiefs of the people, those who had joined to Baal-peor their god. Jehovah also sent a plague among the people that killed 24,000. He also commanded Moses to smite the Midianites (who were apparently the chief offenders) for beguiling them in that matter.

After that Jehovah told Moses and Eleazar (who replaced Aaron) to take another census of the men twenty years old and upward. Each tribe was numbered, and the total was 601,730. That was 1,820 fewer than the first census. Then the Levites were numbered. Among all those numbered not a man remained from the first census except Caleb and Joshua, the two faithful spies.

When Daughters Can Inherit

Next Moses asked Jehovah to settle a case of the daughters of Zelophehad. He had no sons, and his daughters did not want his inheritance lost. Jehovah said they were right, and he gave a law for such events. Jehovah said, **"Thou shall surely give them a possession of an inheritance among their father's brothers, and thou shall cause the inheritance of their father to pass to them. And thou shall speak to the sons of Israel, saying, If a man dies, and has no son, then ye shall cause his inheritance to pass to his daughter. And if he has no daughter, then ye shall give his inheritance to his brothers. And if he has no brothers, then ye shall give his inheritance to his father's brothers. And if his father has no brothers, then ye shall give his inheritance to his kinsman who is next to him of his family, and he shall possess it. And it shall be to the sons of Israel a statute *and* ordinance, as Jehovah commanded Moses"** (27:6-11).

God Prepares Moses to Die

Jehovah then told Moses to get upon a mountain, because it was time for him to be gathered to his people, meaning to die. When Moses asked Jehovah for his replacement, he told him to take Joshua, and appoint him before the people. Jehovah also said Joshua was to inquire

of him by Eleazar the priest, who would use the Urim (a form of lot). Then Jehovah gave more laws.

The Scheduled Offerings

Daily

"Command the sons of Israel, and say to them, My oblation, my food for my offerings made by fire, of a sweet savor to me, ye shall observe to offer to me in their due season. And thou shall say to them, This is the offering made by fire which ye shall offer to Jehovah: he-lambs a year old without blemish, two day by day, for a continual burnt offering. The one lamb thou shall offer in the morning, and the other lamb thou shall offer at evening, and the tenth part of an ephah of fine flour for a meal offering, mingled with the fourth part of a hin of beaten oil.

"It is a continual burnt offering, which was ordained on mount Sinai for a sweet savor, an offering made by fire to Jehovah. And the drink offering of it shall be the fourth part of a hin for the one lamb. In the holy place thou shall pour out a drink offering of strong drink to Jehovah. And the other lamb thou shall offer at evening. As the meal offering of the morning, and as the drink offering of it, thou shall offer it, an offering made by fire, of a sweet savor to Jehovah" (28:2-8).

On the sabbath day

"And on the sabbath day two he-lambs a year old without blemish, and two tenth parts *of an ephah* of fine flour for a meal offering, mingled with oil, and the drink offering of it. This is the burnt offering of every sabbath, besides the continual burnt offering, and the drink offering of it" (28:9-10).

At the beginning of the month

"And in the beginnings of your months ye shall offer a burnt offering to Jehovah: two young bullocks, and one ram, seven he-lambs a year old without blemish, and three tenth parts *of an ephah* of fine flour for a meal offering, mingled with oil for each bullock, and two tenth parts of fine flour for a meal offering, mingled with oil for the one ram, and a tenth part of fine flour mingled with oil for a meal offering to every lamb, for a burnt offering of a sweet savor, an offering made by fire to Jehovah. And their drink offerings shall be half a hin of wine for a bullock, and the third part of a hin for the ram, and the fourth part of a hin for a lamb.

"This is the burnt offering of every month throughout the months of the year. And one he-goat for a sin offering to Jehovah, it shall be offered besides the continual burnt offering, and the drink offering of it" (28:11-15).

The Passover

"And in the first month, on the fourteenth day of the month, is Jehovah's Passover" (28:16).

The feast of unleavened bread

"And on the fifteenth day of this month shall be a feast; seven days shall unleavened bread be eaten. In the first day shall be a holy convocation. Ye shall do no job work. But ye shall offer an offering made by fire, a burnt offering to Jehovah: two young bullocks, and one ram, and seven he-lambs a year old (they shall be to you without blemish), and their meal offering, fine flour mingled with oil. Three tenth parts ye shall offer for a bullock, and two tenth parts for the ram, a tenth part shall thou offer for every lamb of the seven lambs. Also one he-goat for a sin offering, to make atonement for you.

"Ye shall offer these besides the burnt offering of the morning, which is for a continual burnt offering. After this manner ye shall offer daily, for seven days, the food of the offering made by fire, of a sweet savor to Jehovah. It shall be offered besides the continual burnt offering, and the drink offering of it. And on the seventh day ye shall have a holy convocation. Ye shall do no job work" (28:17-25).

The feast of weeks

"Also in the day of the first-fruits, when ye offer a new meal offering to Jehovah in your *feast of* weeks, ye shall have a holy convocation. Ye shall do no job work. But ye shall offer a burnt offering for a sweet savor to Jehovah: two young bullocks, one ram, seven he-lambs a year old, and their meal offering, fine flour mingled with oil, three tenth parts for each bullock, two tenth parts for the one ram, a tenth part for every lamb of the seven lambs, one he-goat, to make atonement for you. Besides the continual burnt offering, and the meal offering of it, ye shall offer them (they shall be to you without blemish), and their drink offerings" (28:26-31).

The blowing of trumpets

"And in the seventh month, on the first day of the month, ye shall have a holy convocation. Ye shall do no job work. It is a day of blowing of trumpets to you. And ye shall offer a burnt offering for a sweet savor to Jehovah: one young bullock, one ram, seven he-lambs a year old without blemish, and their meal offering, fine flour mingled with oil, three tenth parts for the bullock, two tenth parts for the ram, and one tenth part for every lamb of the seven lambs, and one he-goat for a sin offering, to make atonement for you, besides the burnt offering of the new moon, and the meal offering of it, and the continual burnt offering and the meal offering of it, and their drink offerings, according to their ordinance, for a sweet savor, an offering made by fire to Jehovah" (29:1-6).

The day of atonement

"And on the tenth day of this seventh month ye shall have a holy convocation, and ye shall afflict your souls. Ye shall do no manner of work. But ye shall offer a burnt offering to Jehovah for a sweet savor: one young bullock, one ram, seven he-lambs a year old (they shall be to you without blemish), and their meal offering, fine flour mingled with oil, three tenth parts for the bullock, two tenth parts for the one ram,

a tenth part for every lamb of the seven lambs, one he-goat for a sin offering, besides the sin offering of atonement, and the continual burnt offering, and the meal offering of it, and their drink offerings" (29:7-11).

Another feast

This was the feast of booths, but the text does not identify it. It says, **"And on the fifteenth day of the seventh month ye shall have a holy convocation. Ye shall do no job work, and ye shall keep a feast to Jehovah seven days. And ye shall offer a burnt offering, an offering made by fire, of a sweet savor to Jehovah: thirteen young bullocks, two rams, fourteen he-lambs a year old (they shall be without blemish), and their meal offering, fine flour mingled with oil, three tenth parts for every bullock of the thirteen bullocks, two tenth parts for each ram of the two rams, and a tenth part for every lamb of the fourteen lambs, and one he-goat for a sin offering, besides the continual burnt offering, the meal offering of it, and the drink offering of it.**

"And on the second day, twelve young bullocks, two rams, fourteen he-lambs a year old without blemish, and their meal offering and their drink offerings for the bullocks, for the rams, and for the lambs, according to their number, after the ordinance, and one he-goat for a sin offering, besides the continual burnt offering, and the meal offering of it, and their drink offerings.

"And on the third day, eleven bullocks, two rams, fourteen he-lambs a year old without blemish, and their meal offering and their drink offerings for the bullocks, for the rams, and for the lambs, according to their number, after the ordinance, and one he-goat for a sin offering, besides the continual burnt offering, and the meal offering of it, and the drink offering of it.

"And on the fourth day, ten bullocks, two rams, fourteen he-lambs a year old without blemish, their meal offering and their drink offerings for the bullocks, for the rams, and for the lambs, according to their number, after the ordinance, and one he-goat for a sin offering, besides the continual burnt offering, the meal offering of it, and the drink offering of it.

"And on the fifth day, nine bullocks, two rams, fourteen he-lambs a year old without blemish, and their meal offering and their drink offerings for the bullocks, for the rams, and for the lambs, according to their number, after the ordinance, and one he-goat for a sin offering, besides the continual burnt offering, and the meal offering of it, and the drink offering of it.

"And on the sixth day, eight bullocks, two rams, fourteen he-lambs a year old without blemish, and their meal offering and their drink offerings for the bullocks, for the rams, and for the lambs, according to their number, after the ordinance, and one he-goat for a sin offering, besides the continual burnt offering, the meal offering of it, and the drink offerings of it.

"And on the seventh day, seven bullocks, two rams, fourteen he-lambs a year old without blemish, and their meal offering and their drink offerings for the bullocks,

for the rams, and for the lambs, according to their number, after the ordinance, and one he-goat for a sin offering, besides the continual burnt offering, the meal offering of it, and the drink offering of it.

"On the eighth day, ye shall have a solemn assembly. Ye shall do no job work. But ye shall offer a burnt offering, an offering made by fire, of a sweet savor to Jehovah: one bullock, one ram, seven he-lambs a year old without blemish, their meal offering and their drink offerings for the bullock, for the ram, and for the lambs, shall be according to their number, after the ordinance, and one he-goat for a sin offering, besides the continual burnt offering, and the meal offering of it, and the drink offering of it" (29:12-38).

The other offerings

"These ye shall offer to Jehovah in your set feasts, besides your vows, and your free-will offerings, for your burnt offerings, and for your meal offerings, and for your drink offerings, and for your peace offerings" (29:39).

Laws About Vows

By a man

"And Moses spoke to the heads of the tribes of the sons of Israel, saying, This is the thing which Jehovah has commanded. When a man vows a vow to Jehovah, or swears an oath to bind his soul with a bond, he shall not break his word. He shall do according to all that proceeds out of his mouth" (30:1-2).

By a daughter

"Also when a woman vows a vow to Jehovah, and binds herself by a bond, being in her father's house, in her youth, and her father hears her vow, and her bond with which she has bound her soul, and her father remains silent at her, then all her vows shall stand, and every bond with which she has bound her soul shall stand. But if her father disallows her in the day that he hears, none of her vows, or of her bonds with which she has bound her soul, shall stand. And Jehovah will forgive her, because her father disallowed her" (30:3-5).

By a wife

"And if she is *married* to a husband, while her vows are upon her, or the rash utterance of her lips, with which she has bound her soul, and her husband hears it, and remains silent at her in the day that he hears it, then her vows shall stand, and her bonds with which she has bound her soul shall stand. But if her husband disallows her in the day that he hears it, then he shall make void her vow which is upon her, and the rash utterance of her lips, with which she has bound her soul. And Jehovah will forgive her.

"But the vow of a widow, or of her who is divorced, *even* everything with which she has bound her soul shall stand against her. And if she vowed in her husband's house,

or bound her soul by a bond with an oath, and her husband heard it, and remained silent at her, and did not disallow her, then all her vows shall stand, and every bond with which she bound her soul shall stand. But if her husband made them null and void in the day that he heard them, then whatever proceeded out of her lips concerning her vows, or concerning the bond of her soul, shall not stand. Her husband has made them void, and Jehovah will forgive her.

"Every vow, and every binding oath to afflict the soul, her husband may establish it, or her husband may make it void. But if her husband altogether remains silent at her from day to day, then he establishes all her vows, or all her bonds, which are upon her. He has established them, because he remained silent at her in the day that he heard them. But if he shall make them null and void after he has heard them, then he shall bear her iniquity" (30:6-15).

The text concludes those laws about vows, saying, **"These are the statutes, which Jehovah commanded Moses, between a man and his wife, between a father and his daughter, being in her youth in her father's house"** (30:16).

More History

Next Jehovah told Moses to avenge the sons of Israel of the Midianites. Afterward he would be gathered to his people. Therefore, Moses sent a thousand men from each of the twelve tribes, twelve thousand armed for war. Eleazar the priest took the vessels of the sanctuary and the trumpets of alarm with them. They utterly defeated the Midianites, and they also killed Balaam. The New Testament says Balaam **"taught Balak to cast a snare before the sons of Israel, even to eat idol sacrifices, and to fornicate"** (Revelation 2:14). He apparently advised using the women to lure the sons of Israel to play the harlot and worship their gods. He knew the only way to defeat Israel was to separate them from Jehovah. His greed led him to sin, and he paid for his sin with his life. The soldiers had taken the women captive, but Moses commanded them to be slain, all but the young virgin girls. Those slain women were the ones who had lured them to sin.

Some Laws About War

Then Moses gave command about how the soldiers were to purify themselves. He said, **"And encamp ye outside the camp seven days. Whoever has killed any person, and whoever has touched any slain, purify yourselves on the third day and on the seventh day, ye and your captives. And as to every garment, and all that is made of skin, and all work of goats' *hair*, and all things made of wood, ye shall purify yourselves"** (31:19-20).

Eleazar the priest also said to the men of war who fought, **"This is the statute of the law which Jehovah has commanded Moses: only the gold, and the silver, the brass, the iron, the tin, and the lead— everything which may go into fire—ye shall make to go through the fire, and it shall be clean. Nevertheless it shall be purified with the water for impurity. And all that may not go into fire ye shall make to go through the water.**

And ye shall wash your clothes on the seventh day, and ye shall be clean, and afterward ye shall come into the camp" (31:21-24).

MORE HISTORY

After that Jehovah told Moses to inventory the prey that were taken, both of man and beast. There was a huge number of virgin girls and cattle that were taken. Half was to go to the men who fought, and half was to be divided for the congregation and for the Levites. After the division the officers of the army came with a large contribution of gold jewelry for Jehovah, which Moses and Eleazar brought into the tent of meeting. The soldiers said they had not lost a single man in the battle.

Sometime later the sons of Reuben and the sons of Gad asked to settle in the land of Gilead on the eastern side of the Jordan. Those tribes had much cattle, and that land was good for them. Moses first criticized them for discouraging the invasion. However, they said their soldiers would cross the Jordan with the other men, and they would fight with them until they had all settled there. So Moses agreed to their request. Next the book lists all the places they had journeyed during their forty years of wandering in the wilderness.

The text then says that Jehovah again told Moses to warn the sons of Israel to utterly drive out the inhabitants of their promised land. He said, **"Speak to the sons of Israel, and say to them, When ye pass over the Jordan into the land of Canaan, then ye shall drive out all the inhabitants of the land from before you, and destroy all their figured *stones*, and destroy all their molten images, and demolish all their high places. And ye shall take possession of the land, and dwell in it, for to you I have given the land to possess it.**

"And ye shall inherit the land by lot according to your families. To the more ye shall give more inheritance, and to the few thou shall give less inheritance. Wherever the lot falls to any man, that shall be his. Ye shall inherit according to the tribes of your fathers.

"But if ye will not drive out the inhabitants of the land from before you, then those that ye let remain of them shall be as pricks in your eyes, and as thorns in your sides, and they shall vex you in the land in which ye dwell. And it shall come to pass, that, as I thought to do to them, so I will do to you" (33:51-56).

After that Jehovah told Moses what the boundaries were to be for the tribes in the land of Canaan. There would be nine and a half tribes there; half the tribe of Manassah joined the tribes of Reuben and Gad on the eastern side of the Jordan. Then he gave Moses the names of the men who were to divide the land for their inheritance, one man from each of the nine and a half tribes. Next he commanded the sons of Israel to give the Levites the inheritance of their possession of cities, forty-eight in all. They were not given a tribal territory of their own. Out of those cities there were to be six cities of refuge where the manslayer could flee for safety, three on the east side of the Jordan and three on the west side.

Murderers and Manslayers

Murderers

"For the sons of Israel, and for the stranger and for the sojourner among them, these six cities shall be for refuge, that everyone who kills any person unwittingly may flee there. But if he smote him with an instrument of iron, so that he died, he is a murderer. The murderer shall surely be put to death. And if he smote him with a stone in the hand, by which a man may die, and he died, he is a murderer. The murderer shall surely be put to death. Or if he smote him with a weapon of wood in the hand, by which a man may die, and he died, he is a murderer. The murderer shall surely be put to death. The avenger of blood shall himself put the murderer to death. When he meets him, he shall put him to death. And if he thrust him from hatred, or hurled at him, lying in wait, so that he died, or in enmity smote him with his hand, so that he died, he who smote him shall surely be put to death. He is a murderer. The avenger of blood shall put the murderer to death, when he meets him" (35:15-21).

Manslayers

"But if he thrust him suddenly without enmity, or hurled upon him anything without lying in wait, or with any stone, by which a man may die, not seeing him, and cast it upon him, so that he died, and he was not his enemy, nor sought his harm, then the congregation shall judge between the smiter and the avenger of blood according to these ordinances. And the congregation shall deliver the manslayer out of the hand of the avenger of blood, and the congregation shall restore him to his city of refuge where he fled. And he shall dwell in it until the death of the high priest, who was anointed with the holy oil.

"But if the manslayer shall at any time go beyond the border of his city of refuge where he flees, and the avenger of blood find him outside the border of his city of refuge, and the avenger of blood kills the manslayer, he shall not be guilty of blood, because he should have remained in his city of refuge until the death of the high priest. But after the death of the high priest the manslayer shall return into the land of his possession. And these things shall be for a statute *and* ordinance to you throughout your generations in all your dwellings" (35:22-29).

More laws for murderers

"Whoever kills any person, the murderer shall be slain at the mouth of witnesses, but one witness shall not testify against any person so that he dies. Moreover ye shall take no ransom for the life of a murderer who is guilty of death, but he shall surely be put to death. And ye shall take no ransom for him who has fled to his city of refuge, that he may come again to dwell in the land, until the death of the priest. So ye shall not pollute the land in which ye are, for blood, it pollutes the land. And no expiation can be made for the land for the blood that is shed in it, but by the blood of him who shed it. And thou shall not defile the land which ye inhabit, in the midst of which I dwell, for I, Jehovah, dwell in the midst of the sons of Israel" (35:30-34).

More Laws About Daughters Who Inherit

Next the book tells of some men who came to Moses about a problem of daughters inheriting land. They said if such daughters married outside their tribe, the land would be lost to it. Therefore, Jehovah said, **"Let them be married to whom they think best, only into the family of the tribe of their father shall they be married. So no inheritance of the sons of Israel shall remove from tribe to tribe, for the sons of Israel shall cling each one to the inheritance of the tribe of his fathers. And every daughter, who possesses an inheritance in any tribe of the sons of Israel, shall be wife to one of the family of the tribe of her father, that the sons of Israel may possess every man the inheritance of his fathers. So no inheritance shall move from one tribe to another tribe, for the tribes of the sons of Israel shall cling each one to his own inheritance"** (36:6-9). The text says the daughters of Zelophehad obeyed. And thus ends the book of Numbers.

Part 1:5

Law in Deuteronomy

The book of Deuteronomy first describes how the sons of Israel were near the eastern edge of the Jordan preparing to invade their promised land. The book begins by saying, **"These are the words which Moses spoke to all Israel … ."** Moses gave them a rather detailed summary of their history from the time they departed mount Sinai. He also spoke many words to encourage them to be faithful to Jehovah, and he spoke some laws.

Some Laws

Neither add nor remove

Among his words, Moses said, **"And now, O Israel, hearken to the statutes and to the ordinances, which I teach you, to do them, that ye may live, and go in and possess the land which Jehovah, the God of your fathers, gives you. Ye shall not add to the word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish from it, that ye may keep the commandments of Jehovah your God which I command you"** (4:1-2). He told how Jehovah would bless them for obedience and curse them for disobedience. Then he repeated Jehovah's words of the ten commandments:

The ten commandments

- **I am Jehovah thy God who brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. Thou shall have no other gods before me.**
- **Thou shall not make to thee a graven image: any likeness that is in heaven above, or that is on the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. Thou shall not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them, for I, Jehovah thy God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the sons, and upon the third and upon the fourth generation of those who hate me, and showing loving kindness to thousands of those who love me and keep my commandments.**
- **Thou shall not take the name of Jehovah thy God in vain, for Jehovah will not hold him guiltless who takes his name in vain.**
- **Observe the sabbath day, to keep it holy, as Jehovah thy God commanded thee. Six days thou shall labor, and do all thy work, but the seventh day is a sabbath to Jehovah thy God: thou shall not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, nor thy man-servant, nor thy maid-servant, nor thine ox, nor thy donkey, nor any of thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates, that thy man-servant and thy maid-servant may rest as well as thou. And thou shall remember that thou were a servant in the land of Egypt, and Jehovah thy God brought thee out from there by a mighty hand and by an outstretched arm, therefore Jehovah thy God commanded thee to keep the sabbath day.**
- **Honor thy father and thy mother, as Jehovah thy God commanded thee, that thy days may be long, and that it may go well with thee in the land which Jehovah thy God gives thee.**

- **Thou shall not murder.**
- **Neither shall thou commit adultery.**
- **Neither shall thou steal.**
- **Neither shall thou bear false witness against thy neighbor.**
- **Neither shall thou covet thy neighbor's wife. Neither shall thou desire thy neighbor's house, his field, or his man-servant, or his maid-servant, his ox, or his donkey, or anything that is thy neighbor's** (5:6-21).

Laws About Obedience

Obey the commandments

"Now this is the commandment, the statutes and the ordinances, which Jehovah your God commanded to teach you, that ye might do them in the land where ye go over to possess it, that thou might fear Jehovah thy God, to keep all his statutes and his commandments, which I command thee, thou, and thy son, and thy son's son, all the days of thy life, and that thy days may be prolonged.

"Hear therefore, O Israel, and observe to do it, that it may be well with thee, and that ye may increase mightily, as Jehovah, the God of thy fathers, has promised to thee, in a land flowing with milk and honey" (6:1-3).

The great commandment

Moses further encouraged them to obey all the statutes and commandments of Jehovah, by saying that God would bless them for their obedience. Then he gave what Jesus said was the great commandment of the law: **"Hear, O Israel: Jehovah our God is one Jehovah. And thou shall love Jehovah thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might"** (6:4-5).

Teach and display the words

"And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be upon thy heart. And thou shall teach them diligently to thy sons, and shall talk of them when thou sit in thy house, and when thou walk by the way, and when thou lie down, and when thou rise up. And thou shall bind them for a sign upon thy hand, and they shall be for frontlets between thine eyes. And thou shall write them upon the door-posts of thy house, and upon thy gates" (6:6-9).

Do not forget Jehovah

"And it shall be, when Jehovah thy God shall bring thee into the land which he swore to thy fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give thee, great and goodly cities, which thou did not build, and houses full of all good things, which thou did not fill, and cisterns hewn out, which thou did not hew, vineyards and olive trees, which thou did not plant, and thou shall eat and be full, then beware lest thou forget Jehovah, who brought thee forth out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage" (6:10-12).

Fear, serve, swear by his name

"Thou shall fear Jehovah thy God, and him thou shall serve, and shall swear by his name" (6:13).

Have no other gods

"Ye shall not go after other gods, of the gods of the peoples that are round about you, for Jehovah thy God in the midst of thee is a jealous God, lest the anger of Jehovah thy God be kindled against thee, and he destroy thee from off the face of the earth" (6:14-15).

Do not challenge God

"Ye shall not challenge Jehovah your God, as ye challenged him in Massah" (6:16).

Obey diligently

"Ye shall diligently keep the commandments of Jehovah your God, and his testimonies, and his statutes, which he has commanded thee" (6:17).

Do what is good and right

"And thou shall do that which is right and good in the sight of Jehovah, that it may be well with thee, and that thou may go in and possess the good land which Jehovah swore to thy fathers, to thrust out all thine enemies from before thee, as Jehovah has spoken" (6:18-19).

Teach your sons why

"When thy son asks thee in time to come, saying, What is the meaning of the testimonies, and the statutes, and the ordinances, which Jehovah our God has commanded you? Then thou shall say to thy son, We were Pharaoh's bondmen in Egypt, and Jehovah brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand. And Jehovah showed signs and wonders, great and grievous, upon Egypt, upon Pharaoh, and upon all his house, before our eyes. And he brought us out from there that he might bring us in to give us the land which he swore to our fathers. And Jehovah commanded us to do all these statutes, to fear Jehovah our God for our good always, that he might preserve us alive as at this day. And it shall be righteousness to us, if we observe to do all this commandment before Jehovah our God as he has commanded us" (6:20-25).

More Words of Encouragement

Moses said they were to utterly destroy the nations of their promised land. And he said, **"Thou shall make no covenant with them, nor show mercy to them. Neither shall thou make marriages with them"** (7:1-2). He warned they would turn away their sons from following him to serve other gods. If that happened Jehovah would destroy them in his anger. He said they were to tear down everything associated with their gods.

He told the sons of Israel they were a holy people to Jehovah, chosen to be his own possession above all other peoples. And he said they would be blessed above all peoples if they

obeyed his statutes and ordinances. He also said God would fight for them when they invaded the land. And he again told them to destroy the images of their gods. He even warned against taking the gold or silver on them, for it was an abomination to Jehovah.

He told them to remember their wilderness wanderings, how Jehovah humbled them and chastened them as a man chastens his son. And he warned them not to forget Jehovah when they became prosperous in the good land, but to bless him. He said they would perish if they turned to other gods.

Moses then rebuked them. He said Jehovah was driving out those other nations because of the wickedness of them. He said, **"Know therefore, that Jehovah thy God does not give thee this good land to possess it for thy righteousness, for thou are a stiff-necked people"** (9:6). And he reminded them of the many things they did to provoke Jehovah to wrath. Indeed, he said, **"Ye have been rebellious against Jehovah from the day that I knew you"** (9:24). He then reminded them of a few other things.

More Laws

What does Jehovah require

Moses spoke the following beautiful words that seem to summarize God's will for them: **"And now, Israel, what does Jehovah thy God require of thee, but to fear Jehovah thy God, to walk in all his ways, and to love him, and to serve Jehovah thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul, to keep the commandments of Jehovah, and his statutes, which I command thee this day for thy good?"** (10:12-13).

Love the sojourner

After speaking of the greatness of Jehovah, and of his justice and compassion, Moses said, **"Love ye therefore the sojourner, for ye were sojourners in the land of Egypt"** (10:19).

Fear and serve God

"Thou shall fear Jehovah thy God. Him thou shall serve, and to him thou shall cling, and by his name thou shall swear. He is thy praise, and he is thy God, who has done for thee these great and awesome things, which thine eyes have seen" (10:20-21).

More Encouraging Words

Moses reminded them about some of the awesome things Jehovah did for them. He said their eyes had seen all that great work. Therefore, they should keep all his commandments. He again told them they would be blessed for their obedience. And he again warned them not to be deceived and turn to other gods, for then they would perish.

Teach and Display the Words

"Therefore ye shall lay up these my words in your heart and in your soul. And ye shall bind them for a sign upon your hand, and they shall be for frontlets between your eyes. And ye shall teach them to your sons, talking of them when thou sit in thy house,

and when thou walk by the way, and when thou lie down, and when thou rise up. And thou shall write them upon the door-posts of thy house, and upon thy gates, that your days may be multiplied, and the days of your sons, in the land which Jehovah swore to your fathers to give them, as the days of the heavens above the earth" (11:18-21).

More Encouraging Words

Moses said they would be blessed greatly for obedience. Then he said, **"Behold, I set before you this day a blessing and a curse: the blessing, if ye shall hearken to the commandments of Jehovah your God, which I command you this day, and the curse, if ye shall not hearken to the commandments of Jehovah your God, but turn aside out of the way which I command you this day to go after other gods, which ye have not known"** (11:26-28).

More Laws

Utterly destroy their religious objects

"These are the statutes and the ordinances which ye shall observe to do in the land which Jehovah, the God of thy fathers, has given thee to possess it all the days that ye live upon the earth. Ye shall surely destroy all the places in which the nations that ye shall dispossess served their gods, upon the high mountains, and upon the hills, and under every green tree. And ye shall break down their altars, and dash in pieces their pillars, and burn their Asherim with fire. And ye shall hew down the graven images of their gods, and ye shall destroy their name out of that place" (12:1-3).

One place for offerings

"Ye shall not do so to Jehovah your God. But to the place which Jehovah your God shall choose out of all your tribes, to put his name there, even to his habitation ye shall seek, and there thou shall come. And there ye shall bring your burnt offerings, and your sacrifices, and your tithes, and the heave offering of your hand, and your vows, and your freewill offerings, and the firstlings of your herd and of your flock. And there ye shall eat before Jehovah your God, and ye shall rejoice in all that ye put your hand to, ye and your households, in which Jehovah thy God has blessed thee.

"**Ye shall not do after all the things that we do here this day, every man whatever is right in his own eyes. For ye are not as yet come to the rest and to the inheritance, which Jehovah thy God gives thee. But when ye go over the Jordan, and dwell in the land which Jehovah your God causes you to inherit, and he gives you rest from all your enemies round about, so that ye dwell in safety, then it shall come to pass that to the place which Jehovah your God shall choose to cause his name to dwell there, there ye shall bring all that I command you: your burnt offerings, and your sacrifices, your tithes, and the heave offering of your hand, and all your choice vows which ye vow to Jehovah.**

"And ye shall rejoice before Jehovah your God, ye, and your sons, and your daughters, and your men-servants, and your maid-servants, and the Levite who is within

your gates—inasmuch as he has no portion nor inheritance with you. Take heed to thyself that thou offer not thy burnt offerings in every place that thou see, but in the place which Jehovah shall choose in one of thy tribes. There thou shall offer thy burnt offerings, and there thou shall do all that I command thee" (12:4-14).

Laws About Eating

Permitted to eat flesh locally

"Notwithstanding, thou may kill and eat flesh within all thy gates, after all the desire of thy soul, according to the blessing of Jehovah thy God which he has given thee, the unclean and the clean may eat of it, as of the gazelle, and as of the hart" (12:15).

Eat no blood

"Only ye shall not eat the blood. Thou shall pour it out upon the ground as water" (12:16).

Cannot eat locally what is dedicated

"Thou may not eat within thy gates the tithe of thy grain, or of thy new wine, or of thine oil, or the firstlings of thy herd or of thy flock, nor any of thy vows which thou vow, nor thy freewill offerings, nor the heave offering of thy hand" (12:17).

Where God chooses

"But thou shall eat them before Jehovah thy God in the place which Jehovah thy God shall choose, thou, and thy son, and thy daughter, and thy man-servant, and thy maid-servant, and the Levite who is within thy gates. And thou shall rejoice before Jehovah thy God in all that thou put thy hand to" (12:18).

(Forsake not the Levite)

"Take heed to thyself that thou not forsake the Levite as long as thou live in thy land" (12:19). Remember a subheading with parentheses is about a law not related to the main heading, but seems to be an aside.

If the place is too far

"When Jehovah thy God shall enlarge thy border, as he has promised thee, and thou shall say, I will eat flesh, because thy soul desires to eat flesh, thou may eat flesh, after all the desire of thy soul. If the place which Jehovah thy God shall choose, to put his name there, be too far from thee, then thou shall kill of thy herd and of thy flock, which Jehovah has given thee, as I have commanded thee, and thou may eat within thy gates, according to all the desire of thy soul. Even as the gazelle and as the hart is eaten, so thou shall eat of it. The unclean and the clean may eat of it alike" (12:20-22).

Eat no blood

"Only be sure that thou not eat the blood. For the blood is the life, and thou shall not eat the life with the flesh. Thou shall not eat it. Thou shall pour it out upon the

ground as water. Thou shall not eat it, that it may go well with thee, and with thy sons after thee, when thou shall do that which is right in the eyes of Jehovah" (12:23-25).

One place for offerings

"Only thy holy things which thou have, and thy vows, thou shall take, and go to the place which Jehovah shall choose. And thou shall offer thy burnt offerings, the flesh and the blood, upon the altar of Jehovah thy God, and the blood of thy sacrifices shall be poured out upon the altar of Jehovah thy God, and thou shall eat the flesh" (12:26-27).

More Laws

Do what is good and right

"Observe and hear all these words which I command thee, that it may go well with thee, and with thy sons after thee forever, when thou do that which is good and right in the eyes of Jehovah thy God" (12:28).

Serve no other gods

"When Jehovah thy God shall cut off the nations from before thee, where thou go in to dispossess them, and thou dispossess them, and dwell in their land, take heed to thyself that thou be not ensnared to follow them, after they are destroyed from before thee, and that thou not inquire after their gods, saying, How do these nations serve their gods? Even so I will do likewise. Thou shall not do so to Jehovah thy God. For every abomination to Jehovah, which he hates, they have done to their gods, for they even burn their sons and their daughters in the fire to their gods" (12:29-31).

Neither add nor diminish

"Whatever thing I command you, that shall ye observe to do. Thou shall not add to it, nor diminish from it" (12:32).

Those Who Serve Other Gods

A prophet

"If there arise in the midst of thee a prophet, or a dreamer of dreams, and he gives thee a sign or a wonder, and the sign or the wonder comes to pass, of which he spoke to thee, saying, Let us go after other gods, which thou have not known, and let us serve them, thou shall not hearken to the words of that prophet, or to that dreamer of dreams, for Jehovah your God proves you, to know whether ye love Jehovah your God with all your heart and with all your soul. Ye shall walk after Jehovah your God, and fear him, and keep his commandments, and obey his voice, and ye shall serve him, and cling to him.

"And that prophet, or that dreamer of dreams, shall be put to death, because he has spoken rebellion against Jehovah your God, who brought you out of the land of

Egypt, and redeemed thee out of the house of bondage, to draw thee aside out of the way which Jehovah thy God commanded thee to walk in. So shall thou put away the evil from the midst of thee" (13:1-5).

A close kin

"If thy brother, the son of thy mother, or thy son, or thy daughter, or the wife of thy bosom, or thy friend, who is as thine own soul, entices thee secretly, saying, Let us go and serve other gods, which thou have not known, thou, nor thy fathers, of the gods of the peoples that are round about you, near to thee, or far off from thee, from the one end of the earth even to the other end of the earth, thou shall not consent to him, nor hearken to him.

"Neither shall thine eye pity him, neither shall thou spare, neither shall thou conceal him, but thou shall surely kill him. Thy hand shall be first upon him to put him to death, and afterwards the hand of all the people. And thou shall stone him to death with stones, because he has sought to draw thee away from Jehovah thy God, who brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. And all Israel shall hear, and fear, and shall no more do any such wickedness as this is in the midst of thee" (13:6-11).

One of your cities

"If thou shall hear tell concerning one of thy cities, which Jehovah thy God gives thee to dwell there, saying, Certain base fellows have gone out from the midst of thee, and have drawn away the inhabitants of their city, saying, Let us go and serve other gods, which ye have not known, then thou shall inquire, and make search, and ask diligently. And, behold, if it be true, and the thing certain, that such abomination is wrought in the midst of thee, thou shall surely smite the inhabitants of that city with the edge of the sword, destroying it utterly, and all that is in it, and the cattle in it, with the edge of the sword.

"And thou shall gather all the spoil of it into the midst of the street of it, and shall burn the city with fire, and all the spoil of it, every whit, to Jehovah thy God, and it shall be a heap forever. It shall not be built again. And nothing of the devoted thing shall cling to thy hand, that Jehovah may turn from the fierceness of his anger, and show thee mercy, and have compassion upon thee, and multiply thee, as he has sworn to thy fathers, when thou shall hearken to the voice of Jehovah thy God, to keep all his commandments which I command thee this day, to do that which is right in the eyes of Jehovah thy God" (13:12-18).

Another Law

Do not disfigure yourself

"Ye are the sons of Jehovah your God. Ye shall not cut yourselves, nor make any baldness between your eyes for the dead. For thou are a holy people to Jehovah thy

God, and Jehovah has chosen thee to be a people for his own possession, above all peoples that are upon the face of the earth" (14:1-2).

Laws About Eating

Beasts that can be eaten

"Thou shall not eat any abominable thing. These are the beasts which ye may eat: the ox, the sheep, and the goat, the hart, and the gazelle, and the roebuck, and the wild goat, and the ibex, and the antelope, and the chamois. And every beast that parts the hoof, and has the hoof cloven in two, *and* chews the cud, among the beasts, that may ye eat" (14:3-6).

Beasts that cannot be eaten

"Nevertheless of those that chew the cud, or of those that have the hoof cloven, these ye shall not eat: the camel, and the hare, and the coney, because they chew the cud but do not part the hoof, they are unclean to you, and the swine, because he parts the hoof but does not chew the cud, he is unclean to you. Of their flesh ye shall not eat, and their carcasses ye shall not touch" (14:7-8).

Creatures in the waters

"These ye may eat of all that are in the waters: whatever has fins and scales ye may eat. And whatever does not have fins and scales ye shall not eat; it is unclean to you" (14:9-10).

Of the birds

"Of all clean birds ye may eat, but these are those of which ye shall not eat: the eagle, and the ossifrage, and the osprey, and the glede, and the falcon, and the kite according to its kind, and every raven after its kind, and the ostrich, and the night-hawk, and the sea-gull, and the hawk according to its kind, the little owl, and the great owl, and the horned owl, and the pelican, and the vulture, and the cormorant, and the stork, and the heron according to its kind, and the hoopoe, and the bat. And all winged creeping things are unclean to you. They shall not be eaten. Of all clean birds ye may eat" (14:11-20).

Nothing that dies of itself

"Ye shall not eat of anything that dies of itself. Thou may give it to the sojourner who is within thy gates, that he may eat it, or thou may sell it to a foreigner, for thou are a holy people to Jehovah thy God" (14:21).

Boiling a kid

"Thou shall not boil a kid in its mother's milk" (14:21).

Tithing

All new crops and firstlings

"Thou shall surely tithe all the increase of thy seed; that which comes forth from the field year by year. And thou shall eat before Jehovah thy God, in the place which he shall choose to cause his name to dwell there, the tithe of thy grain, of thy new wine, and of thine oil, and the firstlings of thy herd and of thy flock, that thou may learn to fear Jehovah thy God always" (14:22-23).

If the way is too long

"And if the way is too long for thee, so that thou are not able to carry it, because the place is too far from thee, which Jehovah thy God shall choose to set his name there when Jehovah thy God shall bless thee, then thou shall turn it into money, and bind up the money in thy hand, and shall go to the place which Jehovah thy God shall choose.

"And thou shall bestow the money for whatever thy soul desires, for oxen, or for sheep, or for wine, or for strong drink, or for whatever thy soul asks of thee. And thou shall eat there before Jehovah thy God, and thou shall rejoice, thou and thy household. And the Levite who is within thy gates, thou shall not forsake him, for he has no portion nor inheritance with thee" (14:24-27).

The third-year tithe

"At the end of every three years thou shall bring forth all the tithe of thine increase in the same year, and shall lay it up within thy gates. And the Levite, because he has no portion nor inheritance with thee, and the sojourner, and the fatherless, and the widow, who are within thy gates, shall come, and shall eat and be satisfied, that Jehovah thy God may bless thee in all the work of thy hand which thou do" (14:28-29).

Laws About the Lowly

The seventh-year release

"At the end of every seven years thou shall make a release. And this is the manner of the release: Every creditor shall release that which he has lent to his neighbor. He shall not exact it from his neighbor and his brother, because Jehovah's release has been proclaimed. From a foreigner thou may exact it, but whatever of thine is with thy brother, thy hand shall release" (15:1-3).

Moses then told how prosperous and strong they would be if they diligently obeyed the voice of Jehovah.

Lending to the poor

"If there be with thee a poor man, one of thy brothers, within any of thy gates in thy land which Jehovah thy God gives thee, thou shall not harden thy heart, nor shut thy

hand from thy poor brother, but thou shall surely open thy hand to him, and shall surely lend him sufficient for his need which he wants.

"Beware that there not be a base thought in thy heart, saying, The seventh year, the year of release, is at hand, and thine eye be evil against thy poor brother, and thou give him nothing, and he cry to Jehovah against thee, and it be sin to thee. Thou shall surely give him, and thy heart shall not be grieved when thou give to him, because for this thing Jehovah thy God will bless thee in all thy work, and in all that thou put thy hand to. For the poor will never cease out of the land. Therefore I command thee, saying, Thou shall surely open thy hand to thy brother, to thy needy, and to thy poor, in thy land" (15:7-11).

Bond service

Release after serving six years

"If thy brother, a Hebrew man, or a Hebrew woman, is sold to thee, and serves thee six years, then in the seventh year thou shall let him go free from thee. And when thou let him go free from thee, thou shall not let him go empty. Thou shall furnish him liberally out of thy flock, and out of thy threshing-floor, and out of thy winepress. As Jehovah thy God has blessed thee thou shall give to him. And thou shall remember that thou were a bondman in the land of Egypt, and Jehovah thy God redeemed thee. Therefore I command thee this thing today" (15:12-15).

Permanent service

"And it shall be, if he says to thee, I will not go out from thee, because he loves thee and thy house, because he is well with thee, then thou shall take an awl, and thrust it through his ear to the door, and he shall be thy servant forever. And also to thy maid-servant thou shall do likewise" (15:16-17).

Eating the Firstlings

In the chosen place

"All the firstling males that are born of thy herd and of thy flock thou shall sanctify to Jehovah thy God. Thou shall do no work with the firstling of thy herd, nor shear the firstling of thy flock. Thou shall eat it before Jehovah thy God year by year in the place which Jehovah shall choose, thou and thy household" (15:19-20).

Eat the blemished locally

"And if it has any blemish, *as* lame or blind, any ill blemish whatever, thou shall not sacrifice it to Jehovah thy God. Thou shall eat it within thy gates. The unclean man and the clean man alike, as the gazelle, and as the hart" (15:21-22).

Eat no blood

"Only thou shall not eat the blood of it. Thou shall pour it out upon the ground as water" (15:23).

The Feast Days

Passover and unleavened bread

How to keep it

"Observe the month of Abib, and keep the Passover to Jehovah thy God, for in the month of Abib Jehovah thy God brought thee forth out of Egypt by night. And thou shall sacrifice the Passover to Jehovah thy God, of the flock and the herd, in the place which Jehovah shall choose to cause his name to dwell there. Thou shall eat no leavened bread with it.

"Seven days thou shall eat unleavened bread with it, even the bread of affliction, for thou came forth out of the land of Egypt in haste, that thou may remember the day when thou came forth out of the land of Egypt all the days of thy life. And there shall be no leaven seen with thee in all thy borders seven days. Neither shall any of the flesh, which thou sacrifice the first day at evening, remain all night until the morning" (16:1-4).

At the chosen place

"Thou may not sacrifice the Passover within any of thy gates, which Jehovah thy God gives thee, but at the place which Jehovah thy God shall choose to cause his name to dwell in, there thou shall sacrifice the Passover at evening, at the going down of the sun, at the season that thou came forth out of Egypt. And thou shall roast and eat it in the place which Jehovah thy God shall choose, and thou shall turn in the morning, and go to thy tents. Six days thou shall eat unleavened bread, and on the seventh day shall be a solemn assembly to Jehovah thy God. Thou shall do no work" (16:5-8).

The feast of weeks

"Thou shall number to thee seven weeks. From the time thou begin to put the sickle to the standing grain thou shall begin to number seven weeks. And thou shall keep the feast of weeks to Jehovah thy God with a tribute of a freewill offering from thy hand, which thou shall give, according as Jehovah thy God blesses thee. And thou shall rejoice before Jehovah thy God, thou, and thy son, and thy daughter, and thy man-servant, and thy maid-servant, and the Levite who is within thy gates, and the sojourner, and the fatherless, and the widow, who are in the midst of thee, in the place which Jehovah thy God shall choose to cause his name to dwell there, and thou shall remember that thou were a bondman in Egypt. And thou shall observe and do these statutes" (16:9-12).

The feast of tabernacles

"Thou shall keep the feast of tabernacles seven days after thou have gathered in from thy threshing-floor and from thy winepress. And thou shall rejoice in thy feast, thou, and thy son, and thy daughter, and thy man-servant, and thy maid-servant, and the Levite, and the sojourner, and the fatherless, and the widow, who are within

thy gates. Seven days thou shall keep a feast to Jehovah thy God in the place which Jehovah shall choose, because Jehovah thy God will bless thee in all thine increase, and in all the work of thy hands, and thou shall be altogether joyful" (16:13-15).

Three times a year

"Three times in a year all thy males shall appear before Jehovah thy God in the place which he shall choose: in the feast of unleavened bread, and in the feast of weeks, and in the feast of tabernacles. And they shall not appear before Jehovah empty" (16:16).

Give according to ability

"Every man shall give as he is able, according to the blessing of Jehovah thy God which he has given thee" (16:17).

More Laws

Make judges and officers

"Thou shall make judges and officers for thee in all thy gates, which Jehovah thy God gives thee, according to thy tribes, and they shall judge the people with righteous judgment" (16:18).

Be just

"Thou shall not distort justice. Thou shall not respect persons, neither shall thou take a bribe, for a bribe blinds the eyes of the wise, and perverts the words of the righteous. Thou shall follow that which is altogether just, that thou may live, and inherit the land which Jehovah thy God gives thee" (16:19-20).

No other religious objects

"Thou shall not plant for thee an Asherah of any kind of tree beside the altar of Jehovah thy God, which thou shall make for thee. Neither shall thou set up a pillar for thee, which Jehovah thy God hates" (16:21-22).

Sacrifice nothing blemished

"Thou shall not sacrifice to Jehovah thy God an ox, or a sheep, in which is a blemish *or* anything bad, for that is an abomination to Jehovah thy God" (17:1).

Anyone Serving Other Gods

Stone after confirming

"If there be found in the midst of thee, within any of thy gates which Jehovah thy God gives thee, man or woman, who does that which is evil in the sight of Jehovah thy God, in transgressing his covenant, and has gone and served other gods, and worshiped them, or the sun, or the moon, or any of the host of heaven, which I have not commanded, and it be told thee, and thou have heard of it, then shall thou inquire diligently. And, behold, if it be true, and the thing certain, that such abomination is wrought in Israel, then thou shall bring forth that man or that woman, who

has done this evil thing, to thy gates, even the man or the woman, and thou shall stone them to death with stones" (17:2-5).

The witnesses

"At the mouth of two witnesses, or three witnesses, shall he who is to die be put to death. He shall not be put to death at the mouth of one witness. The hand of the witnesses shall be first upon him to put him to death, and afterward the hand of all the people. So thou shall put away the evil from the midst of thee" (17:6-7).

Central Judges

Difficult judgments

"If there arise a matter too hard for thee in judgment, between blood and blood, between plea and plea, and between stroke and stroke, being matters of controversy within thy gates, then thou shall arise, and get thee up to the place which Jehovah thy God shall choose. And thou shall come to the priests the Levites, and to the judge who shall be in those days, and thou shall inquire. And they shall show thee the sentence of judgment.

"And thou shall do according to the tenor of the sentence which they shall show thee from that place which Jehovah shall choose. And thou shall observe to do according to all that they shall teach thee, according to the tenor of the law which they shall teach thee, and according to the judgment which they shall tell thee, thou shall do. Thou shall not turn aside from the sentence, which they shall show thee, to the right hand, nor to the left" (17:8-11).

Rejecting their judgment

"And the man who does presumptuously, in not hearkening to the priest who stands to minister there before Jehovah thy God, or to the judge, even that man shall die, and thou shall put away the evil from Israel. And all the people shall hear, and fear, and do no more presumptuously" (17:12-13).

Setting Up a King

When thou desire

"When thou have come to the land which Jehovah thy God gives thee, and shall possess it, and shall dwell in it, and shall say, I will set a king over me like all the nations that are round about me, thou shall surely set him king over thee whom Jehovah thy God shall choose. Thou shall set a king over thee from among thy brothers. Thou may not put a foreigner over thee who is not thy brother" (17:14-15).

Things he is not to multiply

"Only he shall not multiply horses to himself, nor cause the people to return to Egypt, to the end that he may multiply horses, inasmuch as Jehovah has said to you, Ye shall henceforth return no more that way. Neither shall he multiply wives to him-

self, that his heart turn not away. Neither shall he greatly multiply to himself silver and gold" (17:16-17).

He shall study the law

"And it shall be, when he sits upon the throne of his kingdom, that he shall write for him a copy of this law in a book, out of *it* before the priests the Levites, and it shall be with him. And he shall read in it all the days of his life, that he may learn to fear Jehovah his God, to keep all the words of this law and these statutes, to do them, that his heart not be lifted up above his brothers, and that he turn not aside from the commandment, to the right hand, or to the left, to the end that he may prolong his days in his kingdom, he and his sons, in the midst of Israel" (17:18-20).

The Levites

Have no inheritance

"The priests the Levites, *even* all the tribe of Levi, shall have no portion nor inheritance with Israel. They shall eat the offerings of Jehovah made by fire, and his inheritance. And they shall have no inheritance among their brothers. Jehovah is their inheritance as he has spoken to them" (18:1-2).

Their wages

"And this shall be the priests' due from the people, from those who offer a sacrifice, whether it be ox or sheep: that they shall give to the priest the shoulder, and the two cheeks, and the maw. The first-fruits of thy grain, of thy new wine, and of thine oil, and the first of the fleece of thy sheep, thou shall give him. For Jehovah thy God has chosen him out of all thy tribes to stand to minister in the name of Jehovah, him and his sons forever" (18:3-5).

Serving at the chosen place

"And if a Levite comes from any of thy gates out of all Israel, where he sojourns, and comes with all the desire of his soul to the place which Jehovah shall choose, then he shall minister in the name of Jehovah his God, as all his brothers the Levites do who stand there before Jehovah. They shall have like portions to eat, besides that which comes of the sale of his patrimony" (18:6-8).

More Laws

No sorcery

"When thou have come into the land, which Jehovah thy God gives thee, thou shall not learn to do according to the abominations of those nations. There shall not be found with thee anyone who makes his son or his daughter to pass through the fire, a psychic, he who practices augury, or an enchanter, or a sorcerer, or a charmer, or a medium, or a spiritist, or a necromancer.

"For whoever does these things is an abomination to Jehovah. And because of these abominations Jehovah thy God drives them out from before thee. Thou shall be perfect with Jehovah thy God. For these nations, that thou shall dispossess, hearken to those who practice augury, and to psychics. But as for thee, Jehovah thy God has not allowed thee to do so" (18:9-14).

Prophets

The future prophet like Moses

"Jehovah thy God will raise up for thee a prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brothers, like me. Ye shall hearken to him, according to all that thou desired of Jehovah thy God in Horeb in the day of the assembly, saying, Let me not hear again the voice of Jehovah my God, neither let me see this great fire any more, that I not die.

"And Jehovah said to me, They have well said that which they have spoken. I will raise up a prophet for them from among their brothers, like thee. And I will put my words in his mouth, and he shall speak to them all that I shall command him. And it shall come to pass, that whoever will not hearken to my words which he shall speak in my name, I will require it of him" (18:15-19).

A presumptuous prophet

"But the prophet, who shall speak a word presumptuously in my name, which I have not commanded him to speak, or who shall speak in the name of other gods, that same prophet shall die. And if thou say in thy heart, How shall we know the word which Jehovah has not spoken? When a prophet speaks in the name of Jehovah, if the thing does not follow, nor come to pass, that is the thing which Jehovah has not spoken. The prophet has spoken it presumptuously. Thou shall not be afraid of him" (18:20-22).

Cities of Refuge

Three cities

"When Jehovah thy God shall cut off the nations, whose land Jehovah thy God gives thee, and thou succeed them, and dwell in their cities, and in their houses, thou shall set apart three cities for thee in the midst of thy land, which Jehovah thy God gives thee to possess it. Thou shall prepare for thee the way, and divide the borders of thy land, which Jehovah thy God causes thee to inherit, into three parts, that every manslayer may flee there" (19:1-3).

For accidental slaying

"And this is the case of the manslayer, who shall flee there and live: Whoever kills his neighbor unawares, and did not hate him in time past, as when a man goes into the forest with his neighbor to hew wood, and his hand fetches a stroke with the axe to cut down the tree, and the head slips from the helve, and lands upon his neighbor, so that he dies, he shall flee to one of these cities and live. Lest the avenger of blood pur-

sue the manslayer, while his heart is hot, and overtake him, because the way is long, and smite him mortally, whereas he was not worthy of death, inasmuch as he did not hate him in time past. Therefore I command thee, saying, Thou shall set apart three cities for thee" (19:4-7).

Three more cities

"And if Jehovah thy God enlarge thy border, as he has sworn to thy fathers, and give thee all the land which he promised to give to thy fathers, if thou shall keep all this commandment to do it, which I command thee this day, to love Jehovah thy God, and to walk ever in his ways, then shall thou add three more cities for thee, besides these three, that innocent blood not be shed in the midst of thy land, which Jehovah thy God gives thee for an inheritance, and so blood be upon thee" (19:8-10).

Not for murderers

"But if any man hates his neighbor, and lies in wait for him, and rises up against him, and smites him mortally so that he dies, and he flees into one of these cities, then the elders of his city shall send and fetch him from there, and deliver him into the hand of the avenger of blood, that he may die. Thine eye shall not pity him, but thou shall put away the innocent blood from Israel, that it may go well with thee" (19:11-13).

More Laws

Landmarks

"Thou shall not remove thy neighbor's landmark, which they of old time have set, in thine inheritance which thou shall inherit, in the land that Jehovah thy God gives thee to possess it" (19:14).

Witnessing

Two witnesses required

"One witness shall not rise up against a man for any iniquity, or for any sin, in any sin that he sins. At the mouth of two witnesses, or at the mouth of three witnesses, shall a matter be established" (19:15).

Punishment for false witnessing

"If an unrighteous witness rises up against any man to testify against him of wrong-doing, then both the men, between whom the controversy is, shall stand before Jehovah, before the priests and the judges that shall be in those days, and the judges shall make diligent inquiry. And, behold, if the witness is a false witness, and has testified falsely against his brother, then ye shall do to him, as he had thought to do to his brother. So shall thou put away the evil from the midst of thee. And those who remain shall hear, and fear, and shall henceforth commit no more any such evil in the midst of thee. And thine eyes shall not pity: life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot" (19:16-21).

Going to War

The priest shall encourage the warriors

"When thou go forth to battle against thine enemies, and see horses, and chariots, *and* a people more than thou, thou shall not be afraid of them, for Jehovah thy God is with thee, who brought thee up out of the land of Egypt. And it shall be, when ye draw near to the battle, that the priest shall approach and speak to the people, and shall say to them, Hear, O Israel, ye draw near this day to battle against your enemies. Let not your heart faint. Fear not, nor tremble, neither be ye frightened at them. For Jehovah your God is he who goes with you, to fight for you against your enemies, to save you" (20:1-4).

Send some men home

"And the officers shall speak to the people, saying, What man is there who has built a new house, and has not dedicated it? Let him go and return to his house, lest he die in the battle, and another man dedicate it. And what man is there who has planted a vineyard, and has not used the fruit of it? Let him go and return to his house, lest he die in the battle, and another man use the fruit of it. And what man is there who has betrothed a wife, and has not taken her? Let him go and return to his house, lest he die in the battle, and another man take her. And the officers shall speak further to the people, and they shall say, What man is there who is fearful and faint-hearted? Let him go and return to his house, lest his brother's heart melt as his heart" (20:5-8).

Appoint captains

"And it shall be, when the officers have made an end of speaking to the people, that they shall appoint captains of armies at the head of the people" (20:9).

Offer terms of peace

"When thou draw near to a city to fight against it, then proclaim peace to it. And it shall be, if it makes to thee an answer of peace, and opens to thee, then it shall be, that all the people that are found in it shall become tributary to thee, and shall serve thee.

"And if it will make no peace with thee, but will make war against thee, then thou shall besiege it. And when Jehovah thy God delivers it into thy hand, thou shall smite every male of it with the edge of the sword, but the women, and the little ones, and the cattle, and all that is in the city, even all the spoil of it, thou shall take for a prey to thyself. And thou shall eat the spoil of thine enemies, which Jehovah thy God has given thee. Thus thou shall do to all the cities which are very far off from thee, which are not of the cities of these nations" (20:10-15).

Peoples in the promised land

"But of the cities of these peoples, that Jehovah thy God gives thee for an inheritance, thou shall save alive nothing that breathes, but thou shall utterly destroy them—the Hittite, and the Amorite, the Canaanite, and the Perizzite, the Hivite, and

the Jebusite—as Jehovah thy God has commanded thee, that they not teach you to do after all their abominations, which they have done to their gods, so ye would sin against Jehovah your God" (20:16-18).

Trees you may cut

"When thou shall besiege a city a long time, in making war against it to take it, thou shall not destroy the trees of it by wielding an axe against them, for thou may eat of them. And thou shall not cut them down, for is the tree of the field a man, that it should be besieged by thee?

"Only the trees of which thou know that they are not trees for food, thou shall destroy and cut them down. And thou shall build bulwarks against the city that makes war with thee, until it falls" (20:19-20).

Unsolved Murders

Gather the elders and judges

"If a man is found slain in the land which Jehovah thy God gives thee to possess it, lying in the field, and it not be known who has smitten him, then thy elders and thy judges shall come forth. And they shall measure to the cities which are round about him who is slain, and it shall be, that the city which is nearest to the slain man, even the elders of that city shall take a heifer of the herd, which has not been worked with, and which has not drawn in the yoke, and the elders of that city shall bring down the heifer to a valley with running water, which is neither plowed nor sown, and shall break the heifer's neck there in the valley" (21:1-4).

Pray the people be forgiven

"And the priests the sons of Levi shall come near, for Jehovah thy God has chosen them to minister to him, and to bless in the name of Jehovah, and according to their word shall every controversy and every stroke be. And all the elders of that city, who are nearest to the slain man, shall wash their hands over the heifer whose neck was broken in the valley, and they shall answer and say, Our hands have not shed this blood, neither have our eyes seen it. Forgive, O Jehovah, thy people Israel whom thou have redeemed, and allow no innocent blood *to remain* in the midst of thy people Israel. And the blood shall be forgiven them. So shall thou put away the innocent blood from the midst of thee when thou shall do that which is right in the eyes of Jehovah" (21:5-9).

Wives

From captives

"When thou go forth to battle against thine enemies, and Jehovah thy God delivers them into thy hands, and thou carry them away captive, and see among the captives a beautiful woman, and thou have a desire for her, and would take her to thee to wife, then thou shall bring her home to thy house. And she shall shave her head, and

pare her nails, and she shall put the raiment of her captivity from off her, and shall remain in thy house, and bewail her father and her mother a full month. And after that thou shall go in to her, and be her husband, and she shall be thy wife.

"And it shall be, if thou have no delight in her, then thou shall let her go where she will, but thou shall not sell her at all for money. Thou shall not deal with her harshly, because thou have humbled her" (21:10-14).

More than one

"If a man has two wives, the one beloved, and the other regarded inferior, and they have borne him sons, both the beloved and the one regarded inferior, and if the first-born son be hers who was regarded inferior, then it shall be, in the day that he causes his sons to inherit that which he has, that he may not make the son of the beloved the firstborn before the son of the one regarded inferior, who is the firstborn. But he shall acknowledge the firstborn, the son of the one regarded inferior, by giving him a double portion of all that he has, for he is the beginning of his strength. The right of the firstborn is his" (21:15-17).

More Laws

An incorrigible son

"If a man has a stubborn and rebellious son, who will not obey the voice of his father, or the voice of his mother, and, though they chasten him, will not hearken to them, then his father and his mother shall lay hold on him, and bring him out to the elders of his city, and to the gate of his place. And they shall say to the elders of his city, This our son is stubborn and rebellious, he will not obey our voice. He is a glutton, and a drunkard. And all the men of his city shall stone him to death with stones. So thou shall put away the evil from the midst of thee, and all Israel shall hear, and fear" (21:18-21).

A hanged man

"And if a man has committed a sin worthy of death, and he be put to death, and thou hang him on a tree, his body shall not remain all night upon the tree, but thou shall surely bury him the same day, for he who is hanged is accursed of God, that thou not defile thy land which Jehovah thy God gives thee for an inheritance" (21:22-23).

Things belonging to a brother

"Thou shall not see thy brother's ox or his sheep go astray, and hide thyself from them. Thou shall surely bring them again to thy brother. And if thy brother be not near to thee, or if thou do not know him, then thou shall bring it home to thy house, and it shall be with thee until thy brother seeks after it, and thou shall restore it to him. And so shall thou do with his donkey, and so shall thou do with his garment, and so shall thou do with every lost thing of thy brother's, which he has lost, and thou have found. Thou may not hide thyself.

"Thou shall not see thy brother's donkey or his ox fallen down by the way, and hide thyself from them. Thou shall surely help him to lift them up again" (22:1-4).

Male and female garments

"A woman shall not wear that which pertains to a man, neither shall a man put on a woman's garment, for whoever does these things is an abomination to Jehovah thy God" (22:5).

Eggs of birds

"If a bird's nest chance to be before thee in the way, in any tree or on the ground, with young ones or eggs, and the dam sitting upon the young or upon the eggs, thou shall not take the dam with the young. Thou shall surely let the dam go, but the young thou may take to thyself, that it may be well with thee, and that thou may prolong thy days" (22:6-7).

Guard rails

"When thou build a new house, then thou shall make a guard rail for thy roof, that thou not bring blood upon thy house, if any man falls from there" (22:8).

Mixing things

"Thou shall not sow thy vineyard with two kinds of seed, lest the whole fruit be forfeited: the seed which thou have sown, and the increase of the vineyard. Thou shall not plow with an ox and a donkey together. Thou shall not wear a mingled stuff, wool and linen together" (22:9-11).

Make hems

"Thou shall make for thee hems upon the four borders of thy clothing, with which thou cover thyself" (22:12).

Laws About Sex

The tokens of virginity

"If any man takes a wife, and goes in to her, and dislikes her, and charges her with shameful things, and brings up an evil name upon her, and says, I took this woman, and when I came near to her, I did not find in her the tokens of virginity, then the father of the damsel, and her mother, shall take and bring forth the tokens of the damsel's virginity to the elders of the city in the gate.

"And the damsel's father shall say to the elders, I gave my daughter to this man to wife, and he dislikes her. And, lo, he has charged her with shameful things, saying, I did not find in thy daughter the tokens of virginity, and yet these are the tokens of my daughter's virginity. And they shall spread the garment before the elders of the city. And the elders of that city shall take the man and chastise him, and they shall fine him a hundred *shekels* of silver, and give them to the father of the damsel, because

he has brought up an evil name upon a virgin of Israel, and she shall be his wife. He may not put her away all his days.

"But if this thing be true, that the tokens of virginity were not found in the damsel, then they shall bring the damsel out to the door of her father's house, and the men of her city shall stone her to death with stones, because she has wrought folly in Israel, to play the harlot in her father's house. So shall thou put away the evil from the midst of thee" (22:13-21).

Adultery

"If a man be found lying with a woman married to a husband, then they shall both of them die, the man that lay with the woman, and the woman. So shall thou put away the evil from Israel" (22:22).

Raping a betrothed virgin

"If there be a damsel who is a virgin betrothed to a husband, and a man finds her in the city, and lies with her, then ye shall bring them both out to the gate of that city. And ye shall stone them to death with stones, the damsel, because she did not cry out, being in the city, and the man, because he has humbled his neighbor's wife. So thou shall put away the evil from the midst of thee.

"But if the man finds the damsel who is betrothed in the field, and the man forces her, and lies with her, then only the man who lay with her shall die, but to the damsel thou shall do nothing. There is in the damsel no sin worthy of death. For as when a man rises against his neighbor, and kills him, even so is this matter, for he found her in the field, the betrothed damsel cried out, and there was none to save her" (22:22-27).

Raping a virgin not betrothed

"If a man finds a damsel who is a virgin, who is not betrothed, and lays hold on her, and lies with her, and they be found, then the man who lay with her shall give to the damsel's father fifty *shekels* of silver, and she shall be his wife, because he has humbled her. He may not put her away all his days" (22:28-29).

Taking your father's wife

"A man shall not take his father's wife, and shall not uncover his father's skirt" (22:30).

Who Can Enter the Assembly

"He who is wounded in the testicles, or has his private part cut off, shall not enter into the assembly of Jehovah.

"A bastard shall not enter into the assembly of Jehovah, even to the tenth generation none of his shall enter into the assembly of Jehovah.

"An Ammonite or a Moabite shall not enter into the assembly of Jehovah, even to the tenth generation none belonging to them shall enter into the assembly of Jehovah forever, because they met you not with bread and with water on the way, when ye came forth out of Egypt, and because they hired against thee Balaam the son of Beor from Pethor of Mesopotamia, to curse thee. Nevertheless Jehovah thy God would not hearken to Balaam, but Jehovah thy God turned the curse into a blessing to thee, because Jehovah thy God loved thee. Thou shall not seek their peace nor their prosperity all thy days forever.

"Thou shall not abhor an Edomite, for he is thy brother. Thou shall not abhor an Egyptian, because thou were a sojourner in his land. The sons of the third generation who are born to them shall enter into the assembly of Jehovah" (23:1-8).

More Laws

Cleanliness in wartime

"When the army goes forth against thine enemies, then thou shall keep thee from every evil thing. If there be among you any man, who is not clean by reason of an accident by night, then he shall go abroad out of the camp. He shall not come inside the camp. But it shall be, when evening comes on, he shall bathe himself in water, and when the sun is down, he shall come inside the camp.

"Thou shall have a place also outside the camp, where thou shall go forth abroad. And thou shall have a paddle among thy weapons, and it shall be, when thou sit down abroad, thou shall dig with it, and shall turn back and cover that which comes from thee. For Jehovah thy God walks in the midst of thy camp, to deliver thee, and to give up thine enemies before thee. Therefore thy camp shall be holy, that he may not see an unclean thing in thee, and turn away from thee" (23:9-14).

An escaped servant

"Thou shall not deliver to his master a servant who is escaped from his master to thee. He shall dwell with thee, in the midst of thee, in the place which he shall choose within one of thy gates, where it pleases him best. Thou shall not oppress him" (23:15-16).

Harlotry

"There shall be no prostitute of the daughters of Israel, neither shall there be a sodomite of the sons of Israel.

"Thou shall not bring the hire of a harlot, or the wages of a dog, into the house of Jehovah thy God for any vow, for even both these are an abomination to Jehovah thy God" (23:17-18).

Interest on loans

"Thou shall not lend upon interest to thy brother: interest of money, interest of food, interest of anything that is lent upon interest. To a foreigner thou may lend upon in-

terest, but to thy brother thou shall not lend upon interest, that Jehovah thy God may bless thee in all that thou put thy hand to, in the land where thou go in to possess it" (23:19-20).

Vows

"When thou shall vow a vow to Jehovah thy God, thou shall not be slack to pay it. For Jehovah thy God will surely require it of thee, and it would be sin in thee. But if thou shall forbear to vow, it shall be no sin in thee. That which has gone out of thy lips thou shall observe and do, according as thou have vowed to Jehovah thy God, a freewill offering, which thou have promised with thy mouth" (23:21-23).

Eating the crops of others

"When thou come into thy neighbor's vineyard, then thou may eat thy fill of grapes at thine own pleasure, but thou shall not put any in thy vessel. When thou come into thy neighbor's standing grain, then thou may pluck the ears with thy hand, but thou shall not move a sickle to thy neighbor's standing grain" (23:24-25).

A forbidden remarriage

"When a man takes a wife, and marries her, then it shall be, if she finds no favor in his eyes, because he has found some unseemly thing in her, that he shall write her a bill of divorcement, and give it in her hand, and send her out of his house. And when she has departed out of his house, she may go and be another man's.

"And if the latter husband dislikes her, and writes her a bill of divorcement, and gives it in her hand, and sends her out of his house, or if the latter husband dies, who took her to be his wife, her former husband, who sent her away, may not take her again to be his wife after she is defiled. For that is abomination before Jehovah, and thou shall not cause the land to sin, which Jehovah thy God gives thee for an inheritance" (24:1-4).

Taking a new wife

"When a man takes a new wife, he shall not go out in the army, neither shall he be charged with any business. He shall be free at home one year, and shall cheer his wife whom he has taken" (24:5).

Not taking to pledge

"No man shall take the mill or the upper millstone to pledge, for he takes life to pledge" (24:6).

Kidnapping

"If a man is found stealing any of his brothers of the sons of Israel, and he deals with him harshly, or sells him, then that thief shall die. So shall thou put away the evil from the midst of thee" (24:7).

Leprosy

"Take heed in the disease of leprosy, that thou observe diligently, and do according to all that the priests the Levites shall teach you. As I commanded them, so ye shall observe to do. Remember what Jehovah thy God did to Miriam by the way as ye came forth out of Egypt" (24:8-9).

Lending and pledges

"When thou do lend thy neighbor any manner of loan, thou shall not go into his house to fetch his pledge. Thou shall stand outside, and the man to whom thou lend shall bring forth the pledge outside to thee.

"And if he is a poor man, thou shall not sleep with his pledge. Thou shall surely restore to him the pledge when the sun goes down, that he may sleep in his garment, and bless thee. And it shall be righteousness to thee before Jehovah thy God" (24:10-13).

Wages of the poor

"Thou shall not oppress a hired servant who is poor and needy, whether he be of thy brothers, or of thy sojourners that are in thy land within thy gates. Thou shall give him his hire in his day, neither shall the sun go down upon it, for he is poor, and sets his heart upon it, lest he cry against thee to Jehovah, and it be sin to thee" (24:14-15).

Death only for the guilty

"The fathers shall not be put to death for the sons, neither shall the sons be put to death for the fathers. Every man shall be put to death for his own sin" (24:16).

For the needy

Do not oppress them

"Thou shall not distort the justice *due* to the sojourner, *or* to the fatherless, nor take the widow's raiment to pledge, but thou shall remember that thou were a bondman in Egypt, and Jehovah thy God redeemed thee from there. Therefore I command thee to do this thing" (24:17-18).

Leave some crops for them

"When thou reap thy harvest in thy field, and have forgotten a sheaf in the field, thou shall not go again to fetch it. It shall be for the sojourner, for the fatherless, and for the widow, that Jehovah thy God may bless thee in all the work of thy hands. When thou beat thine olive tree, thou shall not go over the boughs again.

"It shall be for the sojourner, for the fatherless, and for the widow. When thou gather of thy vineyard, thou shall not glean it behind thee. It shall be for the sojourner, for the fatherless, and for the widow. And thou shall remember that thou were a bondman in the land of Egypt. Therefore I command thee to do this thing" (24:19-22).

A limit to whipping

"If there be a controversy between men, and they come to judgment, and *they* judge them, then they shall justify the righteous, and condemn the iniquitous. And it shall be, if the iniquitous man is deserving to be beaten, that the judge shall cause him to lie down, and to be beaten before his face, according to his iniquity, by number. He may give him forty stripes. He shall not exceed, lest, if he should exceed, and beat him above these with many stripes, then thy brother should seem debased to thee" (25:1-3).

Muzzling an ox

"Thou shall not muzzle the ox when he treads out *the grain*" (25:4).

Marital duty of a brother

"If brothers dwell together, and one of them dies, and has no son, the wife of the dead man shall not be married outside to a stranger. Her husband's brother shall go in to her, and take her to him to wife, and perform the duty of a husband's brother to her. And it shall be, that the firstborn who she bears shall succeed in the name of his brother who is dead, that his name be not blotted out of Israel.

"And if the man does not want to take his brother's wife, then his brother's wife shall go up to the gate to the elders, and say, My husband's brother refuses to raise up to his brother a name in Israel. He will not perform the duty of a husband's brother to me. Then the elders of his city shall call him, and speak to him. And if he stands, and says, I do not want to take her, then his brother's wife shall come to him in the presence of the elders, and loose his shoe from off his foot, and spit in his face. And she shall answer and say, So shall it be done to the man who does not build up his brother's house. And his name shall be called in Israel, The house of him who has his shoe loosed" (25:5-10).

Grasping the private part

"When men strive together one with another, and the wife of the one draws near to deliver her husband out of the hand of him who smites him, and puts forth her hand, and takes him by the privates, then thou shall cut off her hand. Thine eye shall have no pity" (25:11-12).

Just measures

"Thou shall not have in thy bag diverse weights, a great and a small. Thou shall not have in thy house diverse measures, a great and a small. A perfect and just weight thou shall have, a perfect and just measure thou shall have, that thy days may be long in the land which Jehovah thy God gives thee. For all who do such things, *even* all who do unrighteously, are an abomination to Jehovah thy God" (25:13-16).

Remember Amalek

"Remember what Amalek did to thee by the way as ye came forth out of Egypt, how he met thee by the way, and smote the hindmost of thee, all who were feeble behind thee, when thou were faint and weary, and he feared not God. Therefore it shall be, when Jehovah thy God has given thee rest from all thine enemies round about, in the land which Jehovah thy God gives thee for an inheritance to possess it, that thou shall blot out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven. Thou shall not forget" (25:17-19).

Bringing the First-Fruits

Go to the chosen place

"And it shall be, when thou have come in to the land which Jehovah thy God gives thee for an inheritance, and possess it, and dwell in it, that thou shall take of the first of all the fruit of the ground, which thou shall bring in from thy land that Jehovah thy God gives thee, and thou shall put it in a basket, and shall go to the place which Jehovah thy God shall choose to cause his name to dwell there" (26:1-2).

Give to the priest

"And thou shall come to the priest who shall be in those days, and say to him, I profess this day to Jehovah thy God, that I have come to the land which Jehovah swore to our fathers to give us. And the priest shall take the basket out of thy hand, and set it down before the altar of Jehovah thy God" (26:3-4).

Speak these words

"And thou shall answer and say before Jehovah thy God, My father was a Syrian ready to perish, and he went down into Egypt, and sojourned there, few in number. And he became there a nation, great, mighty, and populous. And the Egyptians dealt ill with us, and afflicted us, and laid upon us hard bondage. And we cried to Jehovah, the God of our fathers, and Jehovah heard our voice, and saw our affliction, and our toil, and our oppression. And Jehovah brought us forth out of Egypt with a mighty hand, and with an outstretched arm, and with great terribleness, and with signs, and with wonders. And he has brought us into this place, and has given us this land, a land flowing with milk and honey. And now, behold, I have brought the first of the fruit of the ground, which thou, O Jehovah, have given me. And thou shall set it down before Jehovah thy God, and worship before Jehovah thy God" (26:5-10).

Rejoice

"And thou shall rejoice in all the good which Jehovah thy God has given to thee, and to thy house, thou, and the Levite, and the sojourner who is in the midst of thee" (26:11).

The third-year Tithe

Give to the needy

"When thou have made an end of tithing all the tithe of thine increase in the third year, which is the year of tithing, then thou shall give it to the Levite, to the sojourner, to the fatherless, and to the widow, that they may eat within thy gates, and be filled" (26:12).

Speak these words

"And thou shall say before Jehovah thy God, I have put away the hallowed things out of my house, and also have given them to the Levite, and to the sojourner, to the fatherless, and to the widow, according to all thy commandment which thou have commanded me. I have not transgressed any of thy commandments, neither have I forgotten them. I have not eaten of it in my mourning, neither have I put away from it, being unclean, nor given of it for the dead. I have hearkened to the voice of Jehovah my God. I have done according to all that thou have commanded me. Look down from thy holy habitation, from heaven, and bless thy people Israel, and the ground which thou have given us, as thou swore to our fathers, a land flowing with milk and honey" (26:13-15).

More Words of Encouragement

Moses said they had avouched Jehovah that day to be their God, to obey him, and he had avouched them to be a people for his own possession, to bless them. Then Moses and the elders of Israel commanded the people to set up great stones after they crossed Jordan. They were to plaster them, and write all the words of the law upon them. He probably meant the ten commandments. They were also to build an altar to Jehovah, and offer burnt offerings, eat there, and rejoice before him.

The Twelve Curses

He also said six tribes were to stand on one mountain to bless the people, and the other six were to stand on another mountain for the curse. Then he gave the words of the twelve curses. Here is what Moses said to them: **"These shall stand upon mount Gerizim to bless the people, when ye have passed over the Jordan: Simeon, and Levi, and Judah, and Issachar, and Joseph, and Benjamin. And these shall stand upon mount Ebal for the curse: Reuben, Gad, and Asher, and Zebulun, Dan, and Naphtali. And the Levites shall answer, and say to all the men of Israel with a loud voice,**

- **Cursed be the man who makes a graven or molten image, an abomination to Jehovah, the work of the hands of the craftsman, and sets it up in secret. And all the people shall answer and say, Truly.**
- **Cursed be he who dishonors his father or his mother. And all the people shall say, Truly.**

- **Cursed be he who removes his neighbor's landmark. And all the people shall say, Truly.**
- **Cursed be he who makes the blind to wander out of the way. And all the people shall say, Truly.**
- **Cursed be he who distorts the justice to the sojourner, fatherless, and widow. And all the people shall say, Truly.**
- **Cursed be he who lies with his father's wife, because he has uncovered his father's skirt. And all the people shall say, Truly.**
- **Cursed be he who lies with any manner of beast. And all the people shall say, Truly.**
- **Cursed be he who lies with his sister, the daughter of his father, or the daughter of his mother. And all the people shall say, Truly.**
- **Cursed be he who lies with his mother-in-law. And all the people shall say, Truly.**
- **Cursed be he who smites his neighbor in secret. And all the people shall say, Truly.**
- **Cursed be he who takes a bribe to kill an innocent man. And all the people shall say, Truly.**
- **Cursed is every man who does not continue in all the words of this law to do them. And all the people shall say, Truly"** (27:12-26).

The Blessing and the Curse

After that Moses described in detail how they would be blessed for obedience and cursed for disobedience. The words are similar to the blessing and curse given in Leviticus. One difference is how the curses are worded. Also the curses are more numerous and severe in this book.

The blessing

Many blessings

"And it shall come to pass, if thou shall hearken diligently to the voice of Jehovah thy God, to observe to do all his commandments which I command thee this day, that Jehovah thy God will set thee on high above all the nations of the earth, and all these blessings shall come upon thee, and overtake thee, if thou shall hearken to the voice of Jehovah thy God: Blessed shall thou be in the city, and blessed shall thou be in the field. Blessed shall be the fruit of thy body, and the fruit of thy ground, and the fruit of thy beasts, the increase of thy cattle, and the young of thy flock. Blessed shall be thy basket and thy kneading-trough. Blessed shall thou be when thou come in, and blessed shall thou be when thou go out" (28:1-6).

Many victories

"Jehovah will cause thine enemies that rise up against thee to be smitten before thee. They shall come out against thee one way, and shall flee before thee seven ways. Jehovah will command the blessing upon thee in thy barns, and in all that thou put thy hand to. And he will bless thee in the land which Jehovah thy God gives thee. Jehovah will establish thee for a holy people to himself, as he has

sworn to thee, if thou shall keep the commandments of Jehovah thy God, and walk in his ways. And all the peoples of the earth shall see that thou are called by the name of Jehovah, and they shall be afraid of thee" (28:7-10).

Prosperity and status

"And Jehovah will make thee plenteous for good, in the fruit of thy body, and in the fruit of thy cattle, and in the fruit of thy ground, in the land which Jehovah swore to thy fathers to give thee. Jehovah will open to thee his good treasure the heavens, to give the rain of thy land in its season, and to bless all the work of thy hand.

"And thou shall lend to many nations, and thou shall not borrow. And Jehovah will make thee the head, and not the tail. And thou shall only be above, and thou shall not be beneath, if thou shall hearken to the commandments of Jehovah thy God, which I command thee this day, to observe and to do, and shall not turn aside from any of the words which I command you this day, to the right hand, or to the left, to go after other gods to serve them" (28:11-14).

The curse

Many curses

"But it shall come to pass, if thou will not hearken to the voice of Jehovah thy God, to observe to do all his commandments and his statutes which I command thee this day, that all these curses shall come upon thee, and overtake thee: Cursed shall thou be in the city, and cursed shall thou be in the field. Cursed shall be thy basket and thy kneading-trough. Cursed shall be the fruit of thy body, and the fruit of thy ground, the increase of thy cattle, and the young of thy flock. Cursed shall thou be when thou come in, and cursed shall thou be when thou go out. Jehovah will send upon thee cursing, discomfiture, and rebuke, in all that thou put thy hand to do, until thou be destroyed, and until thou perish quickly, because of the evil of thy doings, by which thou have forsaken me" (28:15-20).

Diseases and defeat

"Jehovah will make the pestilence cling to thee, until he has consumed thee from off the land, where thou go in to possess it. Jehovah will smite thee with consumption, and with fever, and with inflammation, and with fiery heat, and with the sword, and with blight, and with mildew. And they shall pursue thee until thou perish. And thy sky that is over thy head shall be brass, and the earth that is under thee shall be iron. Jehovah will make the rain of thy land powder and dust. From the sky it shall come down upon thee, until thou be destroyed.

"Jehovah will cause thee to be smitten before thine enemies. Thou shall go out one way against them, and shall flee seven ways before them. And thou shall be tossed to and fro among all the kingdoms of the earth. And thy dead body shall be food to all birds of the sky, and to the beasts of the earth, and there shall be none to frighten them away.

"Jehovah will smite thee with the boil of Egypt, and with the emerods, and with the scurvy, and with the itch, of which thou cannot be healed. Jehovah will smite thee with madness, and with blindness, and with confusion of mind, and thou shall grope at noonday, as the blind man gropes in darkness" (28:21-29).

Violent oppression

"And thou shall not prosper in thy ways. And thou shall only be oppressed and robbed always, and there shall be none to save thee. Thou shall betroth a wife, and another man shall lie with her. Thou shall build a house, and thou shall not dwell in it. Thou shall plant a vineyard, and shall not use the fruit of it. Thine ox shall be slain before thine eyes, and thou shall not eat of it. Thy donkey shall be violently taken away from before thy face, and shall not be restored to thee. Thy sheep shall be given to thine enemies, and thou shall have none to save thee. Thy sons and thy daughters shall be given to another people. And thine eyes shall look, and fail with longing for them all the day, and there shall be nothing in the power of thy hand. The fruit of thy ground, and all thy labors, shall a nation eat up which thou know not.

"And thou shall only be oppressed and crushed always, so that thou shall be mad because of the sight of thine eyes which thou shall see. Jehovah will smite thee in the knees, and in the legs, with a sore boil, of which thou cannot be healed, from the sole of thy foot to the crown of thy head" (28:29-35).

Poor, weak, and hated

"Jehovah will bring thee, and thy king whom thou shall set over thee, to a nation that thou have not known, thou nor thy fathers. And there thou shall serve other gods, wood and stone. And thou shall become an astonishment, a proverb, and a byword, among all the peoples where Jehovah shall lead thee away.

"Thou shall carry much seed out into the field, and shall gather little in, for the locust shall consume it. Thou shall plant vineyards and dress them, but thou shall neither drink of the wine, nor gather, for the worm shall eat them. Thou shall have olive trees throughout all thy borders, but thou shall not anoint thyself with the oil, for thine olive shall drop off. Thou shall beget sons and daughters, but they shall not be thine, for they shall go into captivity. All thy trees and the fruit of thy ground shall the locust possess.

"The sojourner who is in the midst of thee shall mount up above thee higher and higher, and thou shall come down lower and lower. He shall lend to thee, and thou shall not lend to him. He shall be the head, and thou shall be the tail. And all these curses shall come upon thee, and shall pursue thee, and overtake thee, till thou be destroyed, because thou hearkened not to the voice of Jehovah thy God, to keep his commandments and his statutes which he commanded thee, and they shall be upon thee for a sign and for a wonder, and upon thy seed forever" (28:36-46).

Defeat by cruel enemies

"Because thou served not Jehovah thy God with joyfulness, and with gladness of heart, by reason of the abundance of all things, therefore thou shall serve thine enemies that Jehovah shall send against thee, in hunger, and in thirst, and in nakedness, and in want of all things. And he shall put a yoke of iron upon thy neck, until he has destroyed thee. Jehovah will bring a nation against thee from far, from the end of the earth, as the eagle flies, a nation whose tongue thou shall not understand, a nation of fierce countenance, that shall not regard the person of the old, nor show favor to the young, and shall eat the fruit of thy cattle, and the fruit of thy ground, until thou be destroyed, that also shall not leave thee grain, new wine, or oil, the increase of thy cattle, or the young of thy flock, until they have caused thee to perish. And they shall besiege thee in all thy gates, until thy high and fortified walls come down, in which thou trusted, throughout all thy land. And they shall besiege thee in all thy gates throughout all thy land, which Jehovah thy God has given thee" (28:47-52).

Eating their own sons and daughters

"And thou shall eat the fruit of thine own body, the flesh of thy sons and of thy daughters, whom Jehovah thy God has given thee, in the siege and in the distress with which thine enemies shall distress thee. The man who is tender among you, and very delicate, his eye shall be evil toward his brother, and toward the wife of his bosom, and toward the remnant of his sons whom he has remaining, so that he will not give to any of them of the flesh of his sons whom he shall eat, because he has nothing left to him, in the siege and in the distress with which thine enemy shall distress thee in all thy gates. The tender and delicate woman among you, who would not adventure to set the sole of her foot upon the ground for delicateness and tenderness, her eye shall be evil toward the husband of her bosom, and toward her son, and toward her daughter, and toward her young one who comes out from between her feet, and toward her sons whom she shall bear, for she shall eat them secretly for want of all things, in the siege and in the distress with which thine enemy shall distress thee in thy gates" (28:53-57).

Every sickness and great calamities

"If thou will not observe to do all the words of this law that are written in this book, that thou may fear this glorious and fearful name, JEHOVAH THY GOD, then Jehovah will make thy calamities extraordinary, and the calamities of thy seed, even great calamities, and of long continuance, and severe sicknesses, and of long continuance. And he will bring upon thee again all the diseases of Egypt, which thou were afraid of, and they shall cling to thee. Also every sickness, and every calamity, which is not written in the book of this law, them Jehovah will bring upon thee, until thou be destroyed. And ye shall be left few in number, whereas ye were as the stars of heaven for multitude, because thou did not hearken to the voice of Jehovah thy God. And it shall come to pass, that, as Jehovah

rejoiced over you to do you good, and to multiply you, so Jehovah will rejoice over you to cause you to perish, and to destroy you" (28:58-63).

Scattered among the nations

"And ye shall be plucked from off the land where thou go in to possess it. And Jehovah will scatter thee among all peoples, from the one end of the earth even to the other end of the earth. And there thou shall serve other gods, which thou have not known, thou nor thy fathers, even wood and stone. And among these nations thou shall find no ease, and there shall be no rest for the sole of thy foot, but Jehovah will give thee there a trembling heart, and failing of eyes, and pining of soul. And thy life shall hang in doubt before thee, and thou shall fear night and day, and shall have no assurance of thy life. In the morning thou shall say, Would it were evening! and at evening thou shall say, Would it were morning! for the fear of thy heart which thou shall fear, and for the sight of thine eyes which thou shall see. And Jehovah will bring thee into Egypt again with ships, by the way of which I said to thee, Thou shall see it no more again. And there ye shall sell yourselves to your enemies for bondmen and for bondwomen, and no man shall buy you" (28:63-68).

More Words of Encouragement

After even more words of encouragement to obey, Moses said, **"I call heaven and earth to witness against you this day, that I have set before thee life and death, the blessing and the curse. Therefore choose life, that thou may live, thou and thy seed, to love Jehovah thy God, to obey his voice, and to cling to him, for he is thy life, and the length of thy days, that thou may dwell in the land which Jehovah swore to thy fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give them"** (30:19-20).

He told them he was 120 years old that day, and Jehovah had told him he could not cross the Jordan. He assured them that Jehovah would go over with them, and would destroy those nations. He also said Joshua would lead them. Therefore, they should be strong and of good courage. Then he called Joshua in the sight of all Israel, and he encouraged him. After that the text says Moses wrote the law, and delivered it to the priests and to the elders of Israel. Then he gave another command.

Read the Law to the People

"And Moses commanded them, saying, At the end of *every* seven years, in the set time of the year of release, in the feast of tabernacles, when all Israel has come to appear before Jehovah thy God in the place which he shall choose, thou shall read this law before all Israel in their hearing. Assemble the people, the men and the women and the little ones, and thy sojourner who is within thy gates, that they may hear, and that they may learn, and fear Jehovah your God, and observe to do all the words of this law, and that their sons who have not known may hear, and learn to fear Jehovah your God as long as ye live in the land where ye go over the Jordan to possess it" (31:10-13).

THE LAST DAYS OF MOSES

Jehovah told Moses it was time for him to die. He prophesied to Moses that the people would play the harlot after strange gods after he died. And he wanted Moses to teach the people a song that would be a witness for Jehovah against them. He said they would remember that song after they suffered many evils and troubles because of their sins.

After writing the song, Moses told the Levites to place the book of the law beside the ark of the covenant. He also called for all the elders and officers. He told them he knew that after his death they would utterly corrupt themselves, and would provoke Jehovah to anger. Then he spoke the words of the song in the ears of all the assembly of Israel.

Moses again urged the people to be obedient. Then Jehovah told Moses to get up onto a mountain where he would be gathered to his people. Next the text tells of the blessing that Moses gave to the different tribes of Israel. Then the text says, **"And Moses went up from the plains of Moab to mount Nebo, to the top of Pisgah, that is opposite Jericho. And Jehovah showed him all the land of Gilead, to Dan, and all Naphtali, and the land of Ephraim and Manasseh, and all the land of Judah, to the farther sea, and the South, and the Plain of the valley of Jericho the city of palm trees, to Zoar. And Jehovah said to him, This is the land which I swore to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, saying, I will give it to thy seed. I have caused thee to see it with thine eyes, but thou shall not go over there.**

"So Moses the servant of Jehovah died there in the land of Moab, according to the word of Jehovah. And he buried him in the valley in the land of Moab opposite Beth-peor, but no man knows of his sepulcher to this day. And Moses was a hundred and twenty years old when he died. His eye was not dim, nor his natural force abated. And the sons of Israel wept for Moses in the plains of Moab thirty days. So the days of weeping and mourning for Moses were ended. Israel hearkened to him, and did as Jehovah commanded Moses.

"And there has not arisen a prophet since in Israel like Moses, whom Jehovah knew face to face, in all the signs and the wonders, which Jehovah sent him to do in the land of Egypt, to Pharaoh, and to all his servants, and to all his land, and in all the mighty hand, and in all the great terror, which Moses wrought in the sight of all Israel." (34:1-12). Thus ends the book of Deuteronomy.

Part 1:6

LAW FROM MOSES TO CHRIST

AWAITING A NEW LAWGIVER

God used Moses to give the law to his people. However, before he died Moses told the people to await another prophet like him. He said, **"Jehovah thy God will raise up for thee a prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brothers, like me. Ye shall hearken to him, according to all that thou desired of Jehovah thy God in Horeb in the day of the assembly, saying, Let me not hear again the voice of Jehovah my God, neither let me see this great fire any more, that I not die. And Jehovah said to me, They have well said that which they have spoken. I will raise up a prophet for them from among their brothers, like thee. And I will put my words in his mouth, and he shall speak to them all that I shall command him. And it shall come to pass, that whoever will not hearken to my words which he shall speak in my name, I will require it of him"** (Deuteronomy 18:15-19).

God sent no such prophet until Jesus Christ because he was the prophet Moses spoke about. That was taught by Peter when he preached the good news to the Jews after Jesus ascended into heaven. Peter said to them: **"Repent ye therefore, and be converted in order to wipe away your sins, so that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord. And he may send Christ Jesus who has been pre-ordained for you, whom heaven must indeed receive until the times of restoration of all things, of which God spoke through the mouth of all his holy prophets from the age. For Moses indeed said to the fathers, the Lord our God will raise up a prophet for you, from your brothers, like me. Ye shall hear him in all things, as many as he might speak to you. And every soul, whichever it will be, if it will not hear that prophet will be utterly destroyed from the people. And also all the prophets from Samuel and those in succession, as many as spoke, also proclaimed these days"** (Acts 3:19-24).

Every other prophet of God after Moses urged the people to obey the laws of Moses. None of them gave new commands from God. Only Jesus gave them new commands because he was the prophet Moses told them to await. And they could be sure Jesus was that prophet because he performed far more miracles than Moses ever did, which was proof he was sent by God.

THE VICIOUS CYCLE OF DISOBEDIENCE

Joshua was the successor to Moses, and he led the sons of Israel across the Jordan to conquer and possess their promised land. Like Moses he urged the people to be faithful and keep all the laws God had given them. However, as every generation had done before, they were not consistent in their obedience.

Near the first part of the book of Judges there is a good summary of how they often vacillated from obedience to rebellion. That passage says, **"Now when Joshua had sent the**

people away, the sons of Israel went every man to his inheritance to possess the land. And the people served Jehovah all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders who outlived Joshua, who had seen all the great work of Jehovah that he had wrought for Israel. And Joshua the son of Nun, the servant of Jehovah, died, being a hundred and ten years old. And they buried him in the border of his inheritance in Timnath-heres, in the hill-country of Ephraim, on the north of the mountain of Gaash. And also all that generation were gathered to their fathers.

"And there arose another generation after them that did not know Jehovah, nor yet the work which he had wrought for Israel. And the sons of Israel did that which was evil in the sight of Jehovah, and served the Baalim. And they forsook Jehovah, the God of their fathers, who brought them out of the land of Egypt, and followed other gods, of the gods of the peoples that were round about them, and bowed themselves down to them. And they provoked Jehovah to anger. And they forsook Jehovah, and served Baal and the Ashtaroth.

"And the anger of Jehovah was kindled against Israel, and he delivered them into the hands of spoilers that despoiled them. And he sold them into the hands of their enemies round about, so that they could not any longer stand before their enemies. Wherever they went out, the hand of Jehovah was against them for evil, as Jehovah had spoken, and as Jehovah had sworn to them. And they were exceedingly distressed.

"And Jehovah raised up judges who saved them out of the hand of those who despoiled them. And yet they did not hearken to their judges, for they played the harlot after other gods, and bowed themselves down to them. They turned aside quickly out of the way in which their fathers walked, obeying the commandments of Jehovah. They did not do so. And when Jehovah raised up judges for them, then Jehovah was with the judge, and saved them out of the hand of their enemies all the days of the judge. For Jehovah regretted because of their groaning because of those who oppressed them and vexed them. But it came to pass, when the judge was dead, that they turned back, and dealt more corruptly than their fathers, in following other gods to serve them, and to bow down to them. They did not cease from their doings, nor from their stubborn way" (Judges 2:6-19).

David and the Temple

God gave his people no other laws until he sent his Son Jesus Christ. However, David was very zealous for God and he wanted to build a temple for him. God would not allow him to build it because he had been a warrior and had fought many battles. Instead God chose David's son Solomon, who was not a warrior, to build the temple. Nevertheless, David made great preparation for the temple. He gathered large stores of supplies, including silver and gold.

He also gave Solomon the plans for the temple, which is told in the following passage: **"Then David gave to Solomon his son the pattern of the porch *of the temple*, and of the houses of it, and of the treasuries of it, and of the upper rooms of it, and of the inner**

chambers of it, and of the place of the mercy-seat, and the pattern of all that he had by the Spirit, for the courts of the house of Jehovah, and for all the chambers round about, for the treasuries of the house of God, and for the treasuries of the dedicated things, also for the divisions of the priests and the Levites, and for all the work of the service of the house of Jehovah, and for all the vessels of service in the house of Jehovah, of gold by weight for the *vessels of* gold, for all vessels of every kind of service; *of silver* for all the vessels of silver by weight, for all vessels of every kind of service, by weight also for the lampstands of gold, and for the lamps of it, of gold, by weight for every lampstand and for the lamps of it, and for the lampstands of silver, *silver* by weight for *every* lampstand and for the lamps of it, according to the use of every lampstand, and the gold by weight for the tables of showbread, for every table, and silver for the tables of silver, and the flesh-hooks, and the basins, and the cups, of pure gold, and for the golden bowls by weight for every bowl, and for the silver bowls by weight for every bowl, and for the altar of incense refined gold by weight, and gold for the pattern of the chariot, *even* the cherubim that spread out *their wings*, and covered the ark of the covenant of Jehovah.

"All this, *David said*, I have been made to understand in writing from the hand of Jehovah, even all the works of this pattern" (First Chronicles 28:11-19).

Near the beginning of that text David said he was given **"the pattern of all that he had by the Spirit ... ."** He was referring to the Spirit of God. And the last part of that passage says he was **"made to understand in writing from the hand of Jehovah, even all the works of this pattern."** God had given Moses detailed instructions for the construction of the tabernacle. And the above passage in First Chronicles indicates he also gave David detailed instructions for the construction of the temple. However, unlike the instructions to Moses there is no record of what God said to or for David. Also, how that **"writing from the hand of Jehovah"** was given to David is never told. God spoke directly to Solomon twice in dreams. However, there is no record he ever appeared to David. When he spoke to him it was always through someone else.

Those instructions for the pattern of the temple were not new laws for the people. Therefore, they do not qualify as fulfillment of what Moses told them to await. What Jesus gave was the new covenant of God and it made the law of Moses obsolete.

First Chronicles (23-27) also describes how David organized the Levites for all the work of the service of God, as well as the rulers of the people. In that lengthy passage there are many names of men given and their specific functions. The following text says he organized the men **"for every matter pertaining to God, and for the affairs of the king"** (First Chronicles 26:32).

Some other passages describe how David added musical services to the worship of God. One says, **"Moreover David and the captains of the army set apart for the service certain of the sons of Asaph, and of Heman, and of Jeduthun, who should prophesy with harps, with psalteries, and with cymbals"** (First Chronicles 25:1). Another says, **"And the priests stood according to their offices, also the Levites with instruments of music**

of Jehovah, which David the king had made to give thanks to Jehovah (for his loving kindness *is* forever) when David praised by their ministry, and the priests sounded trumpets before them. And all Israel stood" (Second Chronicles 7:6). However, nothing of that changed anything about the laws of Moses.

National Destruction

After David the sons of Israel continued the pattern of cycling from obedience to disobedience. And the trend was progressively downward. God sent many prophets to warn them of his wrath if they did not repent and obey his laws. Near the end he sent his prophet Jeremiah to speak to them. Among the things he said to his people were these words: **"Since the day that your fathers came forth out of the land of Egypt to this day, I have sent to you all my servants the prophets, daily rising up early and sending them. Yet they hearkened not to me, nor inclined their ear, but made their neck stiff. They did worse than their fathers"** (Jeremiah 7:25-26). Each generation became progressively more sinful. Consequently, God eventually destroyed their nation.

Because of the idolatry of Solomon, Jehovah divided the tribes into northern and southern kingdoms, which often fought with each other. The northern kingdom was called Israel, and the southern kingdom was called Judah. A few centuries after that the people of the northern kingdom became so bad he destroyed it utterly. The following passage describes how it happened: **"In the ninth year of Hoshea, the king of Assyria took Samaria, and carried Israel away to Assyria, and placed them in Halah, and on the Habor, the river of Gozan, and in the cities of the Medes. And it was so, because the sons of Israel had sinned against Jehovah their God who brought them up out of the land of Egypt from under the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt, and had feared other gods, and walked in the statutes of the nations, whom Jehovah cast out from before the sons of Israel, and of the kings of Israel, which they made.**

"And the sons of Israel did things secretly that were not right against Jehovah their God. And they built for them high places in all their cities, from the tower of the watchmen to the fortified city. And they set up for them pillars and Asherim upon every high hill, and under every green tree, and there they burnt incense in all the high places, as the nations did whom Jehovah carried away before them. And they wrought wicked things to provoke Jehovah to anger. And they served idols, of which Jehovah had said to them, Ye shall not do this thing.

"Yet Jehovah testified to Israel, and to Judah, by every prophet, and every seer, saying, Turn ye from your evil ways, and keep my commandments and my statutes, according to all the law which I commanded your fathers, and which I sent to you by my servants the prophets. Notwithstanding, they would not hear, but stiffened their neck, like the neck of their fathers who did not believe in Jehovah their God. And they rejected his statutes, and his covenant that he made with their fathers, and his testimonies which he testified to them. And they followed vanity, and became vain, and *went* after the nations that were round about them, concerning whom Jehovah had charged

them that they should not do like them. And they forsook all the commandments of Jehovah their God, and made for them molten images, even two calves, and made an Asherah, and worshiped all the host of heaven, and served Baal. And they caused their sons and their daughters to pass through the fire, and used divination and enchantments, and sold themselves to do that which was evil in the sight of Jehovah to provoke him to anger.

"Therefore Jehovah was very angry with Israel, and removed them out of his sight. There was none left but only the tribe of Judah. Also Judah did not keep the commandments of Jehovah their God, but walked in the statutes of Israel which they made. And Jehovah rejected all the seed of Israel, and afflicted them, and delivered them into the hand of spoilers, until he had cast them out of his sight. For he tore Israel from the house of David. And they made Jeroboam the son of Nebat king. And Jeroboam drove Israel from following Jehovah, and made them sin a great sin. And the sons of Israel walked in all the sins of Jeroboam which he did. They did not depart from them until Jehovah removed Israel out of his sight, as he spoke by all his servants the prophets.

"So Israel was carried away out of their own land to Assyria to this day. And the king of Assyria brought men from Babylon, and from Cuthah, and from Avva, and from Hamath and Sepharvaim, and placed them in the cities of Samaria instead of the sons of Israel. And they possessed Samaria, and dwelt in the cities of it" (Second Kings 17:6-24).

Some of the exiled Israelites of the defunct northern kingdom returned to that area and intermarried with those Gentiles. Thus were born the half-breed people of Samaria who were so despised by the Jews during the time of Jesus.

About one hundred and fifty years after the destruction of the northern kingdom God sent another army to destroy the southern kingdom because they also had become so sinful. The following passage describes what happened there: **"Moreover all the chiefs of the priests, and the people, trespassed very greatly after all the abominations of the nations. And they polluted the house of Jehovah which he had hallowed in Jerusalem. And Jehovah, the God of their fathers, sent to them by his messengers, rising up early and sending, because he had compassion on his people, and on his dwelling-place. But they mocked the messengers of God, and despised his words, and scoffed at his prophets, until the wrath of Jehovah arose against his people, till there was no remedy.**

"Therefore he brought upon them the king of the Chaldeans, who killed their young men with the sword in the house of their sanctuary, and had no compassion upon young man or virgin, old man or hoary-headed. He gave them all into his hand. And all the vessels of the house of God, great and small, and the treasures of the house of Jehovah, and the treasures of the king, and of his rulers, all these he brought to Babylon. And they burnt the house of God, and broke down the wall of Jerusalem, and burnt all the palaces of it with fire, and destroyed all the good vessels of it. And those who had escaped from the sword he carried away to Babylon, and they were servants

to him and his sons until the reign of the kingdom of Persia, to fulfill the word of Jehovah by the mouth of Jeremiah, until the land had enjoyed its sabbaths; as long as it lay desolate it kept sabbath, to fulfill seventy years" (Second Chronicles 36:14-21).

Revival of Judah

Jeremiah had prophesied that Jerusalem would remain destroyed for seventy years. After that time God brought back some of the people to rebuild and revive the southern kingdom. The following is one passage that describes how it happened: **"And I, even I Artaxerxes the king** [of Persia]**, do make a decree to all the treasurers who are beyond the River, that whatever Ezra the priest, the scribe of the law of the God of heaven, shall require of you, it be done with all diligence, to a hundred talents of silver, and to a hundred measures of wheat, and to a hundred baths of wine, and to a hundred baths of oil, and salt without prescribing how much. Whatever is commanded by the God of heaven, let it be done exactly for the house of the God of heaven; for why should there be wrath against the realm of the king and his sons? Also we certify to you, that concerning any of the priests and Levites, the singers, porters, Nethinim, or servants of this house of God, it shall not be lawful to impose tribute, custom, or toll, upon them.**

"And thou, Ezra, according to the wisdom of thy God, that is in thy hand, appoint magistrates and judges, who may judge all the people who are beyond the River, all such as know the laws of thy God, and teach ye him who does not know them. And whoever will not do the law of thy God, and the law of the king, let judgment be executed upon him with all diligence, whether it be to death, or to banishment, or to confiscation of goods, or to imprisonment" (Ezra 7:21-26).

The Old Testament tells nothing more after the time the southern kingdom was rebuilt. From that time until Christ neither history nor prophecy is recorded in the Bible. It was a time of silence from God, and it caused the people to long for the promised Messiah who would bring them salvation.

PART TWO:
THE LAWS ANALYZED

Part 2:1

ABOUT JEHOVAH

THE GREAT COMMANDMENT

When Jesus was asked what was the great commandment of the law, he quoted a passage from Deuteronomy, which says, **"Hear, O Israel: Jehovah our God is one Jehovah. And thou shall love Jehovah thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might"** (Deuteronomy 6:4-5). Jehovah is our Creator and the source of all our blessings. Therefore, it is only right for us to love him with all our heart and soul and might.

When Jehovah sent Moses to bring the sons of Israel out of bondage, he performed many mighty signs and wonders in their sight. He even spoke to them with a mighty voice from mount Sinai when he gave them the ten commandments. He delivered them from bondage, provided for their needs, and was going to make of them a holy nation. They had many reasons to love him with all their heart and soul and might. Yet they continually rebelled against him.

Here is what one of the psalmists said about them: **"And he saved them from the hand of him who hated them, and redeemed them from the hand of the enemy. And the waters covered their adversaries; there was not one of them left. Then they believed his words. They sang his praise.**

"They soon forgot his works. They did not wait for his counsel, but lusted exceedingly in the wilderness, and challenged God in the desert. And he gave them their request, but sent leanness into their soul. They also envied Moses in the camp, *and* Aaron the sanctified of Jehovah. The earth opened and swallowed up Dathan, and covered the company of Abiram. And a fire was kindled in their company. The flame burned up the wicked *men*.

"They made a calf in Horeb, and worshiped a molten image. Thus they changed their glory for the likeness of an ox that eats grass. They forgot God their Savior, who had done great things in Egypt, wondrous works in the land of Ham, *and* fearful things by the Red Sea. Therefore he said that he would destroy them, had not Moses his chosen stood before him in the breach, to turn away his wrath, lest he should destroy. Yea, they despised the pleasant land. They did not believe his word, but murmured in their tents, and did not hearken to the voice of Jehovah" (Psalm 106:10-25).

When they even refused to invade the promised land, Jehovah said to Moses, **"How long will this people despise me? And how long will they not believe in me, for all the signs which I have wrought among them?"** (Numbers 14:11). They neither loved him nor believe in him. They preferred to worship the likeness of an ox that eats grass. They did not want to love God because they wanted to indulge their lusts. Men today prefer to honor a mythical force they call evolution, which they claim created them. They do not want to love God because they want to indulge their lusts.

Jehovah even lived in the world as a man, kind and generous, but most still would not love and believe in him. The New Testament says that Jesus was Jehovah of the Old Testament (see First Corinthians 10:4). When the unbelieving Jews said to Jesus that God was their father, he replied, **"If God were your Father, ye would love me, for I came forth and have come from God. For, neither have I come for myself, but he sent me. Why do ye not understand my speech? Because ye cannot hear my word. Ye are from the father, the devil, and ye want to do the desires of your father. He was a man-killer from the beginning, and he has not stood in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own, because he is a liar, and the father of it. And I, because I speak the truth, ye do not believe me. Which of you convicts me about sin? And if I speak truth, why do ye not believe me? He who is of God hears the sayings of God. Because of this ye do not hear, because ye are not of God"** (John 8:42-47).

Actually, God has so made us that unless we love truth and righteousness we cannot believe in him. That is explained in this scripture: **"But although having done so many signs before them, they did not believe in him, so that the word of Isaiah the prophet that he spoke might be fulfilled: Lord, who has believed our report? And to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed? Because of this they could not believe. Because Isaiah said again, He has blinded their eyes, and has hardened their heart, so that they would not see with their eyes, and understand with their heart, and be turned, and I would heal them"** (John 12:37-40). God does not want his heavenly world filled with evil like this one. Therefore, he prevents those who hate righteousness and love evil from seeking salvation; he blinds their eyes and hardens their hearts.

The sons of Israel hated Jehovah because the world hates him. Indeed, Jesus said to his few disciples, **"If the world hates you, know that it has hated me before you"** (John 15:18). He also said, **"He who hates me hates my Father also"** (John 15:23). There was a time when even Jesus' own brothers did not believe in him (although they certainly did not hate him). So he told them, **"The world cannot hate you** [as unbelievers]**, but it hates me because I testify about it, that its works are evil"** (John 7:7). The reason the world hates God is because their works are evil. And their works are evil because they love to sin.

On another occasion Jesus said to the Jews, **"... the light has come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the light, for their deeds were evil. For every man who does evil hates the light, and does not come to the light, so that his works may not be exposed"** (John 3:17-20). After saying those words, Jesus added, **"But he who does the truth comes to the light, so that his deeds may be made manifest that they are wrought in God"** (John 3:21). Jesus said he was the light of the world. And when his apostle John spoke of Jesus as the light, he said, **"He was the true light coming into the world that enlightens every man. He was in the world, and the world came to be through him, and the world knew him not. He came to his own, and his own did not accept him. But as many as did accept him, to them he gave power to become children of God, to those who believe in his name ..."** (John 1:9-12).

Jesus said he was the light of the world, but he also said to his disciples, **"Ye are the light of the world"** (Matthew 5:14). We who are faithful disciples of Christ, we too are the light of the world because we reflect the character of God. For his Spirit dwells within us (see First Corinthians 3:16). Therefore, strive to love Jehovah thy God with all thy heart and soul and might.

Fear, Love, and Obedience

There are several passages in the Bible that state briefly what God wants of us. One in the laws of Moses says, **"And now, Israel, what does Jehovah thy God require of thee, but to fear Jehovah thy God, to walk in all his ways, and to love him, and to serve Jehovah thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul, to keep the commandments of Jehovah, and his statutes, which I command thee this day for thy good?"** (Deuteronomy 10:12-13).

Those are beautiful words summarizing what God wanted of his people Israel. Namely, (1) to fear him, (2) to walk in all his ways, (3) to love him, (4) to serve him with all their heart and with all their soul, and (5) to keep his commandments and his statutes. He wanted those things of his people then, and he wants them of us now. All those things work together—fear, love, and obedience—to produce righteousness. Fear helps us reject evil, love helps us want to please God, and obedience helps make us healthy and productive. It is through service to God that we are healthy and productive.

Service to God is not just limited to things we think of as religious. Service to God includes all things righteous. For Paul said, **"And all things, anything whatever ye may do, work from soul as to the Lord and not to men, knowing that from the Lord ye will receive the reward of the inheritance, for ye serve the Lord Christ"** (Colossians 3:23-24). Therefore, whatever we do that is righteous is service to God. And it will be rewarded, if not in this life, then in the one to come. Honorable labor of any kind is service to God because it is a manifestation of his righteousness, and that promotes his cause.

Moses also said, **"Thou shall fear Jehovah thy God. Him thou shall serve, and to him thou shall cling, and by his name thou shall swear. He is thy praise, and he is thy God, who has done for thee these great and awesome things, which thine eyes have seen"** (Deuteronomy 10:20-21), and, **"Thou shall fear Jehovah thy God, and him thou shall serve, and shall swear by his name"** (Deuteronomy 6:13).

God wants us to fear him, and serve him, and cling to him. If we as disciples of Christ recognize God as our heavenly Father, then we should act that way. We should cling to him as a child clings to his parents. For he is indeed our praise and our God who has done for us great and awesome things, though not the same as what he did for those sons of Israel. Actually, what God has done for the world during my generation is even more awesome. He has opened the windows of heaven, and poured out blessings that our forefathers would have thought were miracles. Notice these scriptures: **"Unless Jehovah builds the house, they labor in vain who build it"** (Psalms 127:1), and, **"Every good gift and every perfect endowment is from above, coming down from the Father of lights"** (James 1:17). It is

by his invisible Spirit that men are able to invent and to build things. I explain how he does in my book *Things Natural and Things Spiritual*. Therefore, all our modern technology and development are ultimately his doing. Always remember that, and give the credit due him.

USING GOD'S NAME

The name Jehovah

Regarding the name "Jehovah," Jesus quoted Moses, when he said, "**Hear, thou Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord, and thou shall love the Lord thy God from thy whole heart, and from thy whole soul, and from thy whole mind, and from thy whole strength"** (Mark 12:29-30). Yet what Moses said was, **"Hear, O Israel: Jehovah our God is one Jehovah. And thou shall love Jehovah thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might"** (Deuteronomy 6:4-5). (The words of Jesus were translated from the Greek language, while the words of Moses were translated from the Hebrew language.) Notice that Jesus said "the Lord" instead of using the name Jehovah. Names are easily transliterated from language to language. Why then did Jesus make that substitution?

According to the Bible record, during the time of Christ the name of God was never pronounced. Even in quotations from the Old Testament where it was found they substituted the word Lord. Non-Biblical history says the ancient Jews after the Old Testament was written had developed a tradition (still observed among them) making it blasphemy to pronounce God's name. That was supposedly to ensure his name would not be taken in vain, which is another example of the foolish reasoning of men. Consequently, during the time of Christ and his apostles pronouncing God's name was apparently illegal in Israel and probably a capital offense. Hence, the writers of the New Testament substituted the word Lord for the Hebrew name of God.

Jesus did not want to offend anybody unnecessarily. Another example of that was about paying taxes. There was a time when the tax collectors came to Peter and asked him if Jesus paid the double-drachma (tax). Jesus taught Peter how they were not obligated. However, he also said this to him: **"But, so that we might not offend them, after going to the sea, cast a hook. And take up the first fish coming up, and having opened its mouth, thou will find a four-drachma coin. After taking that, give thou to them for me and thee"** (Matthew 17:27).

No doubt the reason Jesus did not pronounce God's name was to avoid offending the Jews unnecessarily. Nevertheless, the Bible never teaches against pronouncing God's name. Therefore, we as disciples of Christ who are not citizens of Israel are under no such restriction. As far as the exact original pronunciation is concerned, that information is lost, but it is not important. We all pronounce our words differently to some extent. That is how we can recognize persons by their speech. Therefore, it is foolish to argue about the exact pronunciation. Paul condemned quarreling about such differences of opinion (see Romans 14). The important thing is that we use the name of God with reverence, no matter how it is pronounced.

Using his name in vain

The third of the ten commandments says, **"Thou shall not take the name of Jehovah thy God in vain, for Jehovah will not hold him guiltless who takes his name in vain.**" By taking the name of Jehovah our God in vain means any improper use of it. I say with deep shame that my countrymen often now use his name in vain. It was not always so, for this is an adulterous generation. Virtually every time I turn on my TV set to watch for more than a few minutes time I hear his name taken in vain. (Actually I do not hear it, but I read it via closed caption because of my hearing handicap.) It has become the most common expletive they use. They have outlawed God and his name in our schools, in our government, and in most work places. It has now become taboo to employ his name with reverence there. However, it has become conventional and almost expected to use his name in vain everywhere.

If I were not convinced the spirit of the devil was behind it (see Ephesians 2:2), it would seem to be an amazing coincidence. Namely, that his name is outlawed for serious use, but encouraged for profane use. It is now almost classed with the infamous four-letter words of vulgar speech; something not to be used in polite conversation, except to utter an expletive, or to associate it with false religions like Mohammedanism.

Jehovah said he would not hold him guiltless who takes his name in vain. This is the only one of the ten commandments where Jehovah uttered a warning about it. Perhaps it was because taking his name in vain is so easy to do, especially in casual talk. Yet that warning should not be taken lightly. God has many ways that he can punish. And if a man becomes guilty before God, he will be punished one way or another. For Solomon said, **"Behold, a righteous man shall be recompensed in the earth, how much more the wicked man and the sinner!"** (Proverbs 11:31).

Yes, taking the name of Jehovah in vain is commonly done by the majority of Americans in this wretched generation. However, I thank God there are still many who love him, and who treat his name with reverence. Here is my advice to you who love God: Whenever possible let those around you know it is offensive to take his name in vain. For I suspect most are not aware of how evil it is. I know it is easy to overlook it, even among friends and relatives, but it should not be overlooked. Warning them is a testimony of our love for God, as well as an act of love toward them. Keep that in mind, and be prepared for ways to inform them gently and tactfully. For Paul said, **"And a bondman of the Lord must not quarrel, but be gentle to all, able to teach, patient, in meekness correcting those who oppose. Perhaps God may grant them repentance for recognition of the truth"** (Second Timothy 2:24-25).

Swearing by his name

The law mentions another way to profane the name of God. Jehovah said, **"And ye shall not swear by my name falsely, and profane the name of thy God. I am Jehovah"** (Leviticus 19:12). To swear is to make a solemn promise. Modern examples of swearing are such things as signing contracts or making an oath in court. It is required by law in

American courts to swear to tell the truth and nothing but the truth. And in the past when our country honored God it was required to swear by his name. But everything about God is now being removed from our government, which has become hostile to him.

Moses commanded against swearing by God's name falsely. However, Jesus commanded his disciples to swear not. What he meant was that our word should be sufficient. The need for swearing suggests all our words are not trustworthy, and Jesus does not want that of us. He wants us to have a reputation that is above reproach. Our word should be so reliable that swearing to what we say is never necessary.

Nevertheless, not many people in the world are faithful Christians. Therefore, for men of the world swearing is sometimes required. It is not a violation of Jesus' command for us to swear under those conditions. It is among Christians that we are not to swear to each other, for our word is our bond. When we as Christians swear to satisfy a worldly requirement (as in court or signing a contract), and then faithfully keep the commitment, that brings honor to Christ. Swearing by God, and then violating the oath is a great sin because it brings reproach to his name; for it associates his name with deceit. Therefore, Christians who make a binding agreement, as in a contract, bring reproach to Christ when they violate it.

In the book of Zechariah we have a warning about swearing falsely by God's name. Zechariah had seen a vision of a flying roll. And when he asked what it was, the agent said, **"This is the curse that goes forth over the face of the whole land. For everyone who steals shall be cut off on the one side according to it, and everyone who swears shall be cut off on the other side according to it. I will cause it to go forth, says Jehovah of hosts, and it shall enter into the house of the thief, and into the house of him who swears falsely by my name. And it shall abide in the midst of his house, and shall consume it, with the timber thereof and the stones thereof"** (Zechariah 5:3-4).

Notice Jehovah said a curse goes **"into the house of him who swears falsely by my name."** That is an example of taking his name in vain, and it casts reproach upon it. For when a man swears by the name of God, and then breaks his oath, it causes men to think ill of God's name. Why? Because his name was used to perpetrate a lie.

Use it reverently

Not only should we avoid using God's name irreverently or recklessly or falsely, but we should not use it in any casual way. It should always be used with the utmost honor and veneration. Anything less makes us liable to the guiltiness Jehovah mentioned in his command. The more love you develop for him the easier it will be to use his name honorably. As I have become older, and have come to love him more, because I have learned so much about him, I now wince every time I hear his name used in vain. I feel compelled again to warn about this. Dear reader, do not allow yourself to become calloused to the wrongful use of his name because it is so frequently done. Keep your heart tender toward him and his holy name. Then I believe his heart will be tender toward you, and he will love you more.

The world tolerates such irreverence and disrespect to God, but remember these words of the psalmist: **"Why do the nations rage, and the peoples meditate vain things? The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against Jehovah, and against his anointed, *saying*, Let us break their bonds apart, and cast away their cords from us. He who sits in the heavens will laugh. The Lord will have them in derision. Then he will speak to them in his wrath, and vex them in his great displeasure"** (Psalms 2:1-5).

SPEAKING EVIL OF HIM

There are two commands in the law that forbid speaking evil of God. One says, **"Thou shall not revile God"** (Exodus 22:28). The other says, **"Whoever curses his God shall bear his sin. And he who blasphemes the name of Jehovah, he shall surely be put to death. All the congregation shall certainly stone him. As well the sojourner, as the home-born, when he blasphemes the Name, shall be put to death"** (Leviticus 24:15-17). They were forbidden to revile or curse God, or to blaspheme his name. God has become so hated during these spiritually degenerate days that many men now revile and curse God, and blaspheme his name. And they are not only tolerated, they are often honored and praised. The penalty stated in the law for doing those things was death. That is how evil God considers those things to be.

CHALLENGING HIM

Another law about God says, **"Ye shall not challenge Jehovah your God, as ye challenged him in Massah"** (Deuteronomy 6:16). Jesus quoted the first part of that passage when Satan tempted him to cast himself from the pinnacle of the temple to prove he was the Son of God. Massah was where the sons of Israel murmured about not having water. They challenged God because they were suffering from thirst.

It is very common, especially nowadays during this evil generation, for people to challenge God when they suffer. When Moses was encouraging the people just before they invaded their promised land, he said to them, **"And thou shall remember all the way which Jehovah thy God has led thee these forty years in the wilderness, that he might humble thee, to prove thee, to know what was in thy heart, whether thou would keep his commandments, or not. And he humbled thee, and allowed thee to hunger, and fed thee with manna, which thou knew not, neither did thy fathers know, that he might make thee know that man does not live by bread alone, but man lives by everything that proceeds out of the mouth of Jehovah"** (Deuteronomy 8:2-3).

God allows us to suffer for many reasons, most of which are no doubt known only to him. Moses gave one reason the sons of Israel suffered. It was to prove them, to test them. God also uses suffering sometimes to strengthen us. A modern proverb of athletes says, "No pain, no gain." It is very foolish to challenge God for any reason, including when we suffer, even when it is unjust and cruel. Read the story of Job to see an example of extreme suffering that was unjust and cruel. Yet God gave Satan permission to afflict Job.

Also remember how Jesus the sinless man suffered cruelly. Yet Jesus never doubted or challenged God no matter how he suffered. His question on the cross, **"My God, my God, why have thou forsaken me"?** (Matthew 27:46), was uttered for our sake. It was a question we all need ask, and to learn the answer for. We should all know that God forsook his only begotten Son to die on the cross because it was necessary for our salvation. That is explained more thoroughly in the New Testament (see also Part 4:1 of this book). Trust your heavenly Father, and follow the example of Jesus our Savior by never challenging him for any reason.

Those Who Hate God

Regarding those who hate God, Jehovah said he visited **"the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, upon the third and upon the fourth generation of those who hate me"** (Exodus 20:5). That does not mean their children are considered guilty. What it means is that the consequences of a father's misdeeds are transmitted to his children to the third and fourth generation. As everybody knows, children suffer when their fathers do wrong. Children inherit more than genes from their fathers. They inherit an environment and a way of life as well. Whether their father is a drunkard, or a violent man, or a liar and a cheat, or a lazy bum, they are going to be affected adversely. Such men directly and/or indirectly do harm to the bodies and minds of their children. And from what God said, the effects are transmitted for three or four generations.

It is a great evil that innocent children suffer because of the guilt of their fathers. Yet everyone suffers more or less because of the guilt of others. Nevertheless, it is wrong to accuse God for not preventing the suffering of innocent souls. Certainly God can do anything, including prevent innocent suffering, but he cannot do what is contradictory. In order to preserve our potential for sonship, by giving us the power of free will, enabling us to have creativity as he has, he must restrict his absolute power over us.

Hence, he cannot save us against our will—not as long as we are made in his image. To claim otherwise is illogical. It is like wanting God to make us free, but not free. And foolish scoffers who blame God for all suffering will experience just condemnation. God did not even spare his own Son Jesus Christ in an effort to save our souls. Do you think he would have subjected his Son to all that he suffered if there were an easier way?

It is certainly true that God can do anything in the real sense, but not ridiculous things like contradictions. It is our duty to try to prevent and correct unjust suffering, but then endure what we must. For those who love and trust God will never suffer beyond this life, but will experience eternal joy with him when it is all over.

God said he shows loving kindness to thousands of those who love him and keep his commandments. Jehovah wants to show his loving kindness to everybody, but not everybody is worthy of it. Many take his blessings and use them against him, as well as against other people. Actually, God does bless everybody to some extent, for Jesus said, **"But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who mistreat you and persecute you, so that ye may become sons of your Fa-**

ther in the heavens, because he makes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and makes rain on the righteous and the unrighteous" (Matthew 5:44-45).

God blesses the righteous and the unrighteous, but he does not show his loving kindness for all men. He shows his loving kindness to those who love him and keep his commandments. How he does that is not always easy to perceive in this dark world. For our perception is exceedingly limited. But Paul assured us of God's perfect care for us who love him and keep his commandments, when he said, **"And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, who are the called according to purpose"** (Romans 8:28).

JEHOVAH ONLY

There are many commands in the law of Moses against other religions. The very first of the ten commandments says, **"I am Jehovah thy God, who brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. Thou shall have no other gods before me."** Jehovah wanted no other gods among his people. And he gave many warnings against going after other gods and serving them. Indeed, he made it a capital crime to serve any other god.

Moses said they were to stone to death any man or woman who served and worshiped any other god, including such things as the sun or the moon; in other words, anything else. But only after a careful examination confirmed it, with at least two witnesses. And the witnesses were to be the first to stone the guilty man, followed by all the people. Moses said that if even their brother, or son or daughter, or wife, or close friend, enticed them secretly to serve other gods, they were not to conceal the matter, but were to inform about it and kill the person. It is noteworthy the command does not list their father and mother. I believe that was deliberate. Perhaps Jehovah did not want to make a law commanding children to make a public accusation of their parents.

Moses said about the guilty person, **"Neither shall thine eye pity him, neither shall thou spare, neither shall thou conceal him, but thou shall surely kill him. Thy hand shall be first upon him to put him to death, and afterwards the hand of all the people"** (Deuteronomy 13:8-9). They were to stone such a man who sought to draw them away from Jehovah. The law also includes a command about how to treat any of their cities that turned to other gods. After careful examination, if it were true they were to completely destroy that city, including everyone and everything in it. And it was never to be rebuilt.

Moses even forbad them speaking the name of other gods: **"And in all things that I have said to you take ye heed, and make no mention of the name of other gods, neither let it be heard out of thy mouth"** (Exodus 23:13). That could not have meant literally, for much later God's faithful prophet Elijah issued this challenge to the sons of Israel: **"How long do ye go limping between the two sides? If Jehovah be God, follow him, but if Baal, then follow him"** (First Kings 18:21).

What that command probably meant was they were not to converse about other gods, or consider their names acceptable. Before the recent vulgarization of American speech it was considered uncouth to use the words of our private body-parts, or things associated with them, in general conversation. That was probably how Jehovah wanted the names of other

gods to be; words considered indecent, and not to be uttered except in special circumstances, such as Elijah's confrontation with the sons of Israel.

God wanted Israel to be a holy nation of his own people, and the laws he gave them were designed to promote that. Thus, there was no tolerance for false religions. Nevertheless, God did not create a prison nation where they were forced to stay and serve him. Israelites who did not want to worship and serve Jehovah were no doubt free to forsake their citizenship and leave. Foreign visitors and residents of Israel were subject to all of their laws, except for worshiping Jehovah such as with peace offerings and observing the feast days. They were not required to worship Jehovah, but neither were they allowed to serve or promote the worship of any other god while they were in Israel.

Why No Tolerance of False Gods

Moses gave one reason why Jehovah wanted them to have no tolerance for other gods. He said, **"When Jehovah thy God shall cut off the nations from before thee, where thou go in to dispossess them, and thou dispossess them, and dwell in their land, take heed to thyself that thou be not ensnared to follow them, after they are destroyed from before thee, and that thou not inquire after their gods, saying, How do these nations serve their gods? Even so I will do likewise. Thou shall not do so to Jehovah thy God. For every abomination to Jehovah, which he hates, they have done to their gods, for they even burn their sons and their daughters in the fire to their gods"** (Deuteronomy 12:29-31).

The worship of false gods has created enormous evil. Notice what Moses said about how worshiping those gods corrupted them: **"For every abomination to Jehovah, which he hates, they have done to their gods, for they even burn their sons and their daughters in the fire to their gods"** (Deuteronomy 12:31). Service to those false gods caused them to commit every abomination to Jehovah which he hates. Indeed, the Bible teaches that every false religion is destructive and should never be accepted by those who love truth and righteousness.

Muslims worship Allah, and look at all the murder and destruction many of them are doing in his name. Modern Americans worship the false god of freedom, and in the name of freedom of choice they have murdered millions of their unborn sons and daughters. Faith in the false god of evolution, which its believers claim created life, is responsible for the deaths of many millions of souls during the twentieth century. Adolph Hitler believed not in the God of the Bible, but in the god of Social Darwinism. Therefore, he and his regime justified all the brutality of their actions to "survival of the fittest." And he is but one example of men who have worshiped the imaginary force they call evolution, and then felt fully justified to commit monstrous acts of evil in the name of evolutionary progress.

Throughout the Bible we are taught there is only one God, and every competing religion or ideology is false and must be opposed. It also teaches there is only one source of knowledge about him and his will for us, and that source is the Holy Bible. Religions and ideologies are integral to the spirit of a nation. They determine its values, and values determine behavior.

There are thousands of different religions and ideologies in the world, and new ones continue to emerge. It is impossible to give an adequate account of even the most popular ones here. I have researched many, including those with the largest following, but I am not going to analyze and critique any of them in this book. They are all vastly inferior to Jehovah and his holy word. There are many good books that expose them, and you can find such books if you search carefully. Religions and ideologies that compete with Jehovah do not promote truth and righteousness. They all produce evil of one kind or another, some being worse than others.

The fruits of the popular religions of Africa and Asia, such as Hinduism, Buddhism, Animism, and Islam have brought people nothing but harm. Whenever and wherever those religions have a strong influence on people they have had a corrosive effect on their lives and their society. Anybody with open eyes and an open mind can see that. The same is true of ideologies that compete with Jehovah, such as communism and humanism.

Examine the places where the influence of those religions and ideologies are strongest and you will see their harmful fruits. Study the history of societies where they have been dominant, and you will see the same evil effects. Beware, however, of much modern writing. It is very common, now even in America, for men to distort and pervert the subject matter of their books to serve as devices for propaganda. It grieves me to say that in pagan America even most history books are now suspect, and not to be trusted. For our modern scholars no longer believe in truth.

The only religion and ideology that has the power to elevate mankind is what is taught in the Holy Bible. It has that power because it came from the true Creator God, and it is filled with truth and wisdom. Compare the lives of those people that have been strongly influenced by the teachings of the Bible with those societies that are most influenced by the teachings of their false religion. Compare the history of those countries where the teachings of the Bible have been dominant with those dominated by false religions. In all of those cases you will see the great superiority of obedience to Jehovah and his Holy Bible. For the Bible is the book written by the Creator God, and it is filled with truth and wisdom.

Another reason God was so strict and severe against tolerance for other gods is given in this passage: **"Take heed to thyself, lest thou make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land where thou go, lest it be for a snare in the midst of thee. But ye shall break down their altars, and dash in pieces their pillars, and ye shall cut down their Asherim, for thou shall worship no other god. For Jehovah, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God. Lest thou make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land, and they play the harlot after their gods, and sacrifice to their gods, and *a man* calls thee and thou eat of his sacrifice, and thou take of their daughters to thy sons, and their daughters play the harlot after their gods, and make thy sons play the harlot after their gods"** (Exodus 34:12-16). That warning was given many times in the law. Moses said tolerating other gods in their midst would tempt them away from Jehovah God, and that would create much harm. And the history of their nation has proven the truth of those words.

The disciples of the devil in America who now control most of our communication media spread the lie that all religions are basically alike and are of equal value. However, nothing could be further from the truth, as a careful examination of them and the fruits they bear proves. Remember what Jehovah said about the false gods of Canaan: **"For every abomination to Jehovah, which he hates, they have done to their gods, for they even burn their sons and their daughters in the fire to their gods"** (Deuteronomy 12:31). And every religion and ideology that competes with Jehovah creates abominations to him. God and his holy word have made it very clear there is only one true religion and one source of knowledge about it. Therefore, allowing competing religions and ideologies to exist eventually leads to perverse behavior. And, like untreated diseases, those things eventually spread.

Part of the Constitution of America is freedom of religion. Therefore, most Americans consider intolerance of other religions and ideologies to be anathema. They are misled. That part of the bill of rights was included because there were so many Protestant denominations in the colonies. But denominations of the church of Christ are also an evil. The true church has no denominations. When the early congregation in Corinth began to fragment into different sects, Paul rebuked them, and he asked, **"Has Christ been divided?"** (First Corinthians 1:13). The true church does not have denominations.

Jehovah God told Adam and Eve about one fruit they were not to eat, and the consequences if they did. Eve believed the lies of the serpent instead of the truth of God, and so she did what God forbad. And Adam followed the example of Eve instead of the command of God. Consequently both suffered for it, and we now have a world filled with evil. Indeed, most of the world ever since has listened to the devil and his disciples, and are following false religions and ideologies.

Beware! Many of the creators and defenders of false religions and ideologies are very clever and cunning. Indeed, the Bible says, **"Now the serpent was more cunning than any beast of the field which Jehovah God had made"** (Genesis 3:1). Hence, many of those religions and ideologies have been cleverly crafted and have great appeal to many people. The best defense against them is the word of God. That is how Jesus answered the devil when he tempted him in the wilderness. Each time he was tempted, he replied, **"It is written …"** (Matthew 4:4, 6, 7), and he rebuffed the devil.

Therefore, careful and continuous study of the words of the Bible are essential to resist the evil temptations of the devil, including the acceptance of false religions and ideologies. Any nation of God that wants to survive for long cannot have tolerance for any other religion or for anything that competes with Jehovah.

No Idols

The second of the ten commandments says, **"Thou shall not make to thee a graven image, nor any likeness *of anything* that is in heaven above, or that is on the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. Thou shall not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them, for I, Jehovah thy God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity**

of the fathers upon the sons, upon the third and upon the fourth generation of those who hate me, and showing loving kindness to thousands of those who love me and keep my commandments." (Remember, sons suffer on earth from the sins of their fathers, but their eternal souls are unaffected.) The command against making idols or any object associated with other gods was repeated in other places of the law.

The ancient world was filled with idols of false gods. And even today there are many people in various countries that worship idols. Even among those who claim to be Christians many of them worship idols or images of what they think Jesus, his mother Mary, and other honored persons looked like. When I was in the military service I was able to visit the Vatican in Rome. In what they call Saint Peter's Basilica is a large bronze statue they claim represents Peter. It was completely tarnished from age except for its right foot. There was a line of worshipers waiting to kneel before that idol to kiss its bronze foot, which was shiny from the worship of many millions who had come there. In fact, I have learned that all the toes of that idol have been worn down noticeably from those acts of worship.

Men love to have such visual representations, but God does not approve any of it. Not only did he command against bowing down to them and serving them, but he commanded against making any such graven image. That Jehovah does not want idols to be created at any time is obvious. However, his command against making a graven image of anything is not as clear. Muslims have copied many things from the Bible, and this command is one of them. And they have interpreted it so literally that their devout artists do not make anything beyond geometric patterns or stylized floral designs. If you will notice their art and architecture you will see that effect.

I do not believe that is what God intended. Remember, we must guard against always interpreting scriptures literally. For after giving that prohibition, God said not to bow down to them. Therefore, he was no doubt referring to idols only. And his statement about not making a graven image of anything in heaven, or on earth, or in the water, almost certainly refers only to idols. Otherwise why would he have said not to bow down to them if no graven image of any kind was to be made?

Moreover, there were times when God himself approved of his people making images of things. For example, there were twelve brass oxen made to support the huge water container used for purification outside the temple building (see First Kings 7:25). And he once commanded Moses to make a fiery serpent of brass for those bitten to look upon to be healed (see Numbers 21:8). Therefore, Jehovah's purpose for the second command was obviously to forbid making any object of worship.

His command was against idolatry. And it is proper to apply the principle of it to any object of worship, whether a graven image or not. For there are many things men bow down to and serve, literally and figuratively, beyond images of gods. Indeed, when Paul was warning against sins of the flesh, he said, **"Put to death therefore your body-parts on the earth: fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and greed, which is idolatry"** (Colossians 3:5). Notice he said greed was idolatry. A greedy man is one who lusts for things; they are his objects of worship. Therefore, lusting after, coveting, idolizing, and adoring things, is

idolatry no matter what the objects are. And that is what will forever remain prohibited. The world is filled with men who idolize things. They commit their whole lives to them, whatever they may be. The worship of money is perhaps the most common kind. And this second of the ten commandments, in its most general sense, forbids all such things.

Jehovah does not want us to worship anything besides him. For he said, **"I, Jehovah thy God, am a jealous God."** And any man who sets money, country, family, or even himself above God, is committing sin. Jealousy is not wrong unless overdone. It is right for God to be jealous of those who belong to him, and it is right for a man to be jealous of his wife and children. Jealousy is a just concern and a just indignation about any threat to a relationship. Envy, on the other hand, is a vice. Envy is lusting after what somebody else has. Too often people confuse the two terms; they use jealousy when they mean envy. A healthy form of jealousy is good to have about some things, but envy is never desirable.

Now about the matter of making images of God and other persons mentioned in the Bible. The fact is, all such representations are deceitful, for nobody knows what any of them looked like. Yet I see such images everywhere, even in the churches where I worship. It was not always so. It is another insidious evil that is rarely resisted these days. Men love to look at things. It is called the lust of the eye (see First John 2:16). Therefore publishers, in order to make books of the Bible more appealing, are employing greater visualization. It is not an aid, it is a corruption and a perverse marketing device. Their god is sales and profit.

If God wanted us to have pictures in the Bible, he would have put them there. Indeed, there are not even any verbal descriptions of persons. There are verbal descriptions of some events and objects, and Jesus gave parables about things. However, there are no pictures, nor are there descriptions of persons, except occasionally simple things, such as being tall or ruddy. And if God thought knowledge of how persons looked was important, he would have included pictures or detailed descriptions of them in the Bible. In my judgment, God deliberately left pictures out because they would detract from what is most important. What Jesus looked like is irrelevant; what he said and did is what matters. Indeed, I suspect the modern emphasis on pictures and sounds is retarding children's development of abstract thinking, which is the highest form of reason.

Part 2:2

THE TEN COMMANDMENTS

The ten commands are found in two places in the books of law. Jehovah himself spoke them first to the sons of Israel soon after they arrived at mount Sinai. They were spoken again by Moses when the sons of Israel were finally ready to cross the Jordan into their promised land. Below are the commandments as first given at mount Sinai (see Exodus 20):

- **I am Jehovah thy God, who brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. Thou shall have no other gods before me.**
- **Thou shall not make to thee a graven image, nor any likeness *of anything* that is in heaven above, or that is on the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. Thou shall not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them, for I, Jehovah thy God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the sons, upon the third and upon the fourth generation of those who hate me, and showing loving kindness to thousands of those who love me and keep my commandments.**
- **Thou shall not take the name of Jehovah thy God in vain, for Jehovah will not hold him guiltless who takes his name in vain.**
- **Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days thou shall labor, and do all thy work, but the seventh day is a sabbath to Jehovah thy God. Thou shall not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy man-servant, nor thy maid-servant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates, for in six days Jehovah made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested the seventh day. Therefore Jehovah blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it.**
- **Honor thy father and thy mother, that thy days may be long in the land which Jehovah thy God gives thee.**
- **Thou shall not murder.**
- **Thou shall not commit adultery.**
- **Thou shall not steal.**
- **Thou shall not bear false witness against thy neighbor.**
- **Thou shall not covet thy neighbor's house. Thou shall not covet thy neighbor's wife, nor his man-servant, nor his maid-servant, nor his ox, nor his donkey, nor anything that is thy neighbor's.**

I discuss other gods, graven images, and God's name in Part 2:1, the sabbath in Part 2:8, fathers and mothers in Parts 2:9 and 2:21, murder in Part 2:21, adultery: in Part 2:11, theft in Part 2:20, witnessing in Part 2:22, and coveting in Part 2:18.

I reproduce the ten commandments collectively here because they are central to the law of Moses. They are what Jehovah spoke directly to the people from mount Sinai. They are what Jehovah wrote on the two stone tablets with his own hand. And they were kept in the sacred ark of the covenant. What made the ark such a great treasure was not the gold covered box, but its contents, And what made the contents such a great treasure was not the stone tablets, but the words that were engraved upon them. The ark of the covenant and the

tablets in it perished long ago, but the words of the covenant—the ten commandments—endure. They are the real treasure, having power to transform the world from evil to good.

Moreover, when Jesus spoke of the law he often emphasized the ten commandments. For example, a man came to Jesus and said, **"Good teacher, what good thing should I do so that I may have eternal life?"** Jesus said to him, **"Why do thou call me good? There is none good except one, God. But if thou want to enter into life, keep the commandments."** The man replied, **"Which?"** And Jesus said to him, **"Thou shall not murder. Thou shall not commit adultery. Thou shall not steal. Thou shall not testify falsely. Honor the father and mother, and, Thou shall love thy neighbor as thyself"** (Matthew 19:16-19). Notice Jesus' examples were mostly from the ten commandments. And wherever those words are loved and obeyed there are great blessings. They ought to be committed to memory and kept in mind by every soul on earth. O how many evils could be avoided if those words prevailed.

Part 2:3

THE SANCTUARY

While Moses was on mount Sinai Jehovah commanded him to collect a freewill offering from the people with which to make a sanctuary for him. After listing all of the kinds of materials he wanted (wood, precious metals and stones, skins, fabrics, oil and spices) he said to Moses, **"And let them make me a sanctuary, that I may dwell among them. According to all that I show thee: the pattern of the tabernacle, and the pattern of all the furniture of it, even so shall ye make it"** (Exodus 25:8-9). The tabernacle, also called the tent of meeting, was designed to be a portable sanctuary for God during the time of their journey to the promised land. It was a place for God himself to come, and was never open to the public, for only Moses and the high priests were allowed in it.

THE FURNISHINGS

The first thing mentioned about the tabernacle, besides listing the materials needed, was God's instructions for the construction of its most sacred item—the ark of the covenant. That was simply a chest (although very beautiful) in which to house the two tablets of stone which had the ten commandments engraved on them. Later a few other things were added.

A cubit is a measure of length, and it is believed to be the distance from a man's elbow to the tip of his middle finger, being roughly a foot and a half. And the ark was two and a half cubits long, a cubit and a half wide, and a cubit and a half high. It was made of acacia wood, and overlaid entirely of gold, both inside and outside, with a crown of gold around it. Its cover was called the mercy-seat (also called the place of forgiveness), and it was made of solid gold. The ark of the covenant was also to have four rings of gold attached to it, in which were placed the two staves for carrying. The staves were also covered with gold, and they were never to be removed.

On top of the mercy-seat were two cherubim of solid hammered gold, one at each end of the cover. Regarding them, Jehovah said, **"And the cherubim shall spread out their wings on high, covering the mercy-seat with their wings, with their faces one to another; the faces of the cherubim shall be toward the mercy-seat"** (Exodus 25:20). Real cherubim are heavenly beings whose primary role appears to be guards. For example, when God sent Adam and Eve out of the garden of Eden, the Bible says, **"And he placed at the east of the garden of Eden the cherubim, and the flame of a sword which turned every way, to guard the way of the tree of life"** (Genesis 3:24).

Nobody knows exactly what the tabernacle or anything about it really looked like, including the cherubim. But there is one thing the Bible does make clear about the appearance of cherubim: they do not look like women or small children. From reading the various references to cherubim in the Bible, I have the impression they are awesome beings of great might. That would certainly make them fitting guards. Of course, what God told Moses to make were only images to represent them.

After telling Moses to place the mercy-seat on top of the ark, with the testimony (engraved on the two tablets) inside of it, he said, **"And there I will meet with thee. And I will commune with thee from above the mercy-seat, from between the two cherubim which are upon the ark of the testimony, of all things which I will give thee in commandment to the sons of Israel"** (Exodus 25:22).

God commanded Moses to make a table of acacia wood overlaid with gold, also having a crown of gold around it. It was two cubits long, a cubit wide, and a cubit and a half high, so it was not quite as large as the ark of the covenant. It also had four rings of gold with their staves. It had dishes, spoons, flagons, and bowls with it, all of gold. And it was to always have showbread on it.

They also made a lampstand of solid gold. It had branches, one in the middle and three on each side, totaling seven. Their cups looked like almond-blossoms. It had snuffers for it. It was to burn pure beaten olive oil, and was to burn continuously every night, so there would always be light in the tabernacle.

The last item of furniture in the tabernacle was an altar to burn incense upon. It was similar to the table for the showbread, although smaller, being only one cubit square, but higher, two cubits instead of a cubit and a half. Aaron was to burn the incense of sweet spices on it every morning and every evening.

Jehovah also gave command about how the furnishings were arranged. He said, **"And thou shall put the mercy-seat upon the ark of the testimony in the most holy place. And thou shall set the table outside the veil, and the lampstand opposite the table on the side of the tabernacle toward the south. And thou shall put the table on the north side"** (Exodus 26:34-35). The tabernacle was to face eastward.

The Tent

The tent itself was thirty cubits long, ten cubits high, and probably ten cubits wide; the width is not as clearly stated. The walls of the tent were vertical wooden boards having rings through which four rods were placed horizontally to hold the boards together. However, there was one rod in the center of each wall that was placed horizontally through holes in the boards themselves. The boards and bars were overlaid with gold, but the rings were solid gold. The boards were set in sockets of silver, which, from the description, might have formed a continuous foundation around the tabernacle, except at the entrance. The tent faced toward the rising of the sun, and there was no wall on that end; it was covered with a screen. There were four layers of curtains to cover the tent; the inner two were of fabric, and the outer two of leather. The innermost layer of leather was of ram's skins dyed red, while the outermost cover was of skins not definitely known.

The innermost layer of the tent was actually **"ten curtains, of fine twined linen, and blue, and purple, and scarlet, with cherubim the work of the skilful workman"** (Exodus 26:1). Those ten curtains were coupled together, five each, by gold clasps in loops to make two adjoining curtains. Those curtains must have hung inside to cover the boards, because they were decorated with cherubim. The other curtain of fabric was made of goat's hair in

eleven sections. It was two cubits longer and wider than the linen curtain, which was under it, and so its edges must have extended over the outside of the board wall. The inner linen curtain was probably attached to the solid walls. The book mentions pegs of brass that were included, so the other three layers were probably held by cords and pegs, but none of that is described.

The tabernacle contained two rooms, the outer room was called the holy place, and the inner room was called the most holy place, or holy of holies. The most holy place was ten cubits square and ten cubits tall. And originally only the ark of the covenant was there. Later, the book of the law was also kept there. The two rooms were separated by a veil, which was held up by four wooden pillars overlaid with gold. The veil was also made like the linen curtains, so the tabernacle was surrounded with woven pictures of cherubim, except perhaps at the entrance. There was no mention of cherubim being woven on the screen which was to cover the entrance, although it too was of blue, and purple, and scarlet linen. The hooks of the pillars supporting the veil were of gold, and their sockets were of silver. The screen at the entrance of the tent was similar but with five pillars. Nothing is said about making a floor for the tabernacle.

The Court

The tent was surrounded by a courtyard enclosed with a fence of plain curtains of fine twined linen. The courtyard was a hundred cubits long and fifty cubits wide, which is about half the size of a modern football field. God also gave details about the curtains of the court and the gate of it. Its curtains were five cubits high, which is about the height of the walls of a typical modern house. That meant activities in the courtyard would not have been visible without being elevated. The curtains were held by sixty pillars spaced five cubits apart. However, even though the courtyard had a fence of curtains around it, since the tabernacle was at least five cubits higher than the fence, then the top of it could have easily been seen outside from a distance.

Before Moses went upon the mountain to receive all the instructions about the tabernacle, Jehovah commanded the sons of Israel to make an altar for their burnt offerings. He said it was to be of earth. He also said it could be of stone, but the stones were not to be hewn or have any tool upon them. He also said, **"Neither shall thou go up by steps to my altar, that thy nakedness be not uncovered on it"** (Exodus 20:26).

However, such an altar was to last only until the tabernacle was built, which was the first day of their second month. For when Jehovah gave Moses all the detailed instructions for his sanctuary, he told him how to make the altar for it. And it was the only altar where burnt offerings could be made. All other altars for burnt offerings were forbidden. Therefore, the earlier command about making an altar was superseded by those new instructions.

He said the altar was made of acacia wood, five cubits square, and three cubits high. It had horns on its four corners, and was overlaid entirely with brass. The brass covering must have been quite thick in order to protect the inner wood from being damaged by the fires of it. Its utensils, the pots for ashes, the shovels, the basins, the flesh-hooks, and the firepans,

were all of brass. The grating was a network of brass. The altar also had four rings with staves for carrying, but made of brass instead of gold.

Also in the courtyard was the laver of brass for washing with water. No dimensions for the laver are specified in the book, so we know neither its size nor its shape, although it was most likely shaped like a bowl because that was the shape of the one for the temple which replaced the tabernacle. The laver was placed between the tent and the altar for the priests to have water to wash their hands and their feet before entering the tent, or before they burned offerings at the altar. Failure to do so was to bring the death penalty.

Oil, Incense, and Bread

During his instructions Jehovah told Moses to create special perfumed oil with which to anoint (1) the tent, (2) the ark and the other furnishings, (3) the altar of burnt offering with its vessels, (4) the laver and its base, and (5) Aaron and his sons. He also said, **"This shall be a holy anointing oil to me throughout your generations. Upon the flesh of man it shall not be poured, neither shall ye make any like it, according to the composition of it. It is holy, *and* it shall be holy to you. Whoever compounds any like it, or whoever puts any of it upon a stranger, he shall be cut off from his people"** (Exodus 30:31-33). The incense was a specially formulated perfume for the holy place. Jehovah also commanded Moses to make oil for the lamps of pure beaten olive oil.

The table in the tent was to have upon it twelve cakes (unsweetened), which were called the showbread or bread of presence. They were placed in two rows of six each. And frankincense was put on each row. They were placed there every sabbath day. And Aaron and his sons were to eat them while they were in a holy place (the tabernacle area). That was the bread David and his men ate, which Jesus spoke about (see Matthew 12:3-4).

The Temple

About five centuries after that portable sanctuary was build, David prepared his son Solomon to build a permanent sanctuary, the temple. Nothing is said about the survival of the original tabernacle until that time, but it probably did not last five centuries. The temple was much larger and even more magnificent. It was sixty cubits long, twenty cubits wide, and thirty cubits high. The porch in front of it spanned the full width of the temple, and extended ten cubits out. It was very tall, a hundred and twenty cubits, being about the height of an eighteen story building. Such a tall tower at the entrance of the temple must have been a spectacular sight, visible for many miles.

Solomon made its windows of fixed lattice-work. Up against the walls of the house, round about, were stories and side-chambers. There were three stories. The first was five cubits wide, the second six cubits, and the third seven cubits. There were offsets in the outside wall of the house so that beams would not be attached to it. Each story was five cubits high, resting on the house with timber of cedar. There was also a spiral staircase from the first to the third story.

The house was made of stone covered with planks of cedar. The stone was like the steel framework used to support modern skyscrapers. Each stone was shaped at the quarry. Indeed, all the parts of the temple were prefabricated, for the record says there was no sound of a tool while it was being assembled. The inner walls were also covered with cedar, and the floor was covered with boards of fir. The innermost section of the house was the oracle, which was the most holy place containing the ark of the covenant of Jehovah. It was a room of twenty cubits square. The section in front of it (the holy place) was forty cubits long. There were chains of gold across in front of the oracle. The book says the whole house inside, including the porch, was overlaid with gold.

There were two cherubim of olive-wood in the oracle. Each one was ten cubits high with a wing span of ten cubits each. They stood beside each other with their wings spread out. Each cherub had a wing that touched a wing of the other cherub and a wing that touched one wall, so that together they spanned the entire width of the oracle. The cherubim were also overlaid with gold. The record also says, **"And he carved all the walls of the house round about with carved figures of cherubim and palm trees and open flowers, inside and outside"** (First Kings 6:29). The entrance of the oracle had two doors of olive-wood with similar carvings, and they also were overlaid with gold. The entrance of the temple also had two similar doors. Finally, it says the inner court was built with three courses of hewn stone, and a course of cedar beams.

There were two pillars of molten brass, each of which was eighteen cubits high topped with ornate capitals, which were set up at the porch of the temple. There was also a molten sea for the water of purification. It was ten cubits in diameter and five cubits high, and was supported by twelve brass oxen, three facing east, three facing south, three facing west, and three facing north. The sea was the thickness of a handbreadth, and had a brim like a cup, like the flower of a lily. It held two thousand baths (a bath is said to be six gallons).

There were also ten basins of brass each holding forty baths. Each basin was supported by a four-wheeled brass wagon. Each wagon had a base like a box that was four cubits square and three cubits deep. The sides of each wagon were engraved with cherubim, lions, and palm trees, below which were wreaths of hanging work. The wheels were like chariot wheels with spokes, and they were beneath the base. At the top of each base was a round band half a cubit high (probably to encompass the basin). The book says that each base was one casting of brass. Five were set on the right side of the house, and five on the left. The sea was set near the right front side of the house; that is, to the southeast. There were also pots, shovels, and bowls. The Bible says, **"Moreover he made an altar of brass, twenty cubits the length of it, and twenty cubits the breadth of it, and ten cubits the height of it"** (Second Chronicles 4:1).

The Bible also says, **"And Solomon made all the vessels that were in the house of Jehovah: the golden altar, and the table whereupon the showbread was, of gold, and the lampstands, five on the right side, and five on the left, before the oracle, of pure gold, and the flowers, and the lamps, and the tongs, of gold, and the cups, and the snuffers, and the basins, and the spoons, and the firepans, of pure gold, and the hinges, both for**

the doors of the inner house, the most holy place, and for the doors of the house, *namely*, of the temple, of gold" (First Kings 7:48-50).

That magnificent temple was destroyed completely about five centuries afterward because the people had become so sinful. The sons of Israel were also taken into exile when that happened. The temple was rebuilt about seventy years later when many of the Jewish exiles returned to Jerusalem. That second temple was much less grand, for the people of Israel were then very poor.

Not long before the time of Christ the temple was renovated and the temple complex greatly enlarged by the first king Herod. Forty years after Jesus began his ministry that temple was also totally destroyed, and the Jews were taken into exile again. About six centuries after that Arab Muslims invaded the land and built a large ornate building on the former temple grounds to cover what they claim is a sacred rock in their religion. They call it the Dome of the Rock, and it is still there. Consequently, modern Jews of Israel cannot rebuild the temple at that location no matter how desperately they would like to. I have no doubt God has made it impossible for them.

The New Temple on Earth

The new covenant of Jesus Christ contains no commands for the construction of sanctuaries, temples, or any kind of sacred building. The temple of God is now the bodies of the disciples of Christ. God's temple on earth is now wherever they are found, because his Holy Spirit dwells within them. For Paul said to his Christian brothers at Corinth, **"Know ye not that ye are a temple of God and the Spirit of God dwells in you? If any man destroys the temple of God, God will destroy this man, for the temple of God is holy, which ye are"** (First Corinthians 3:16-17). And he said to the Ephesians, **"So then ye are no more alien and foreign, but fellow citizens of the sanctified, and belonging to the household of God. Which was built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the chief corner, in whom the whole building joined together grows into a holy temple in the Lord, in whom ye also are built together in Spirit into a habitation of God"** (Ephesians 2:19-22).

Hence, the new temple of God on earth is a living thing composed of holy men, his sanctified. And wherever Christians assemble in the name of God, there is his temple. It is not the place that is important, it is the faithfulness of our hearts. Indeed, there is no Bible record that the early Christians ever purchased or constructed a building they considered a sanctuary for them. It only speaks of places they assembled in the name of Christ, including their homes. We are under the law of liberty, and are therefore free to assemble and worship wherever we consider would be appropriate. And that would even include being out in the open, for wherever we assemble in the name of the Lord, there is the temple of God.

The Temple in Heaven

The book of Revelation does speak of a temple of God in heaven, but there is much mystery about that. Here is one passage that mentions it: **"And the temple of God was opened in**

heaven, and the ark of the covenant of the Lord was seen in his temple" (Revelation 11:19). Here is another: **"He who overcomes, I** [Jesus] **will make him a pillar in the temple of my God, and he will, no, not go out any more. And I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, the new Jerusalem (it comes down out of the heaven from my God), and my new name"** (Revelation 3:12).

However, near the end of the book, when it was describing the new Jerusalem of heaven, it says, **"And I saw no temple in it, for the Lord God Almighty is the temple of it, and the Lamb"** (Revelation 21:22). The new Jerusalem is where all the faithful disciples of Christ will live. John said he saw no temple in it, for God and Christ were its temple. Apparently the temple in heaven will be the entire city of the new Jerusalem. For the tabernacle and the temple on earth were both called the house of God. And the Father and the Son will dwell in that Jerusalem of the new heaven and earth.

Part 2:4

FEASTS: THE HOLY CONVOCATIONS

Jehovah commanded the sons of Israel to hold feasts three times annually. He said, **"Three times thou shall keep a feast to me in the year. Thou shall keep the feast of unleavened bread (Seven days thou shall eat unleavened bread, as I commanded thee, at the time appointed in the month Abib, for in it thou came out from Egypt, and none shall appear before me empty), and the feast of harvest, the first-fruits of thy labors, which thou sow in the field, and the feast of ingathering at the end of the year, when thou gather in thy labors out of the field. Three times in the year all thy males shall appear before the lord Jehovah"** (Exodus 23:14-17). The Passover was combined with the feast of unleavened bread.

All their males were required to attend those feasts at the appointed place, and each man was to bring offerings according to how he had prospered. Those were to be times of feasting and rejoicing before Jehovah. In addition to those times Jehovah commanded the weekly sabbath day, the annual day of blowing of trumpets, and the annual day of atonement to be observed regularly.

The weekly sabbath day was instituted soon after the sons of Israel departed from Egypt. Jehovah commanded it even before they arrived at mount Sinai, and he reminded them often to keep it. One of those reminders was given when he listed his set feasts. The text says, **"And Jehovah spoke to Moses, saying, Speak to the sons of Israel, and say to them, The set feasts of Jehovah, which ye shall proclaim to be holy convocations, even these are my set feasts. Six days shall work be done, but on the seventh day is a sabbath of solemn rest, a holy convocation. Ye shall do no manner of work. It is a sabbath to Jehovah in all your dwellings"** (Leviticus 23:1-3).

PASSOVER

The Passover was instituted even before the sabbath. Indeed, two weeks before the exodus Jehovah commanded observance of that first feast day. The death of the firstborn was the last of the ten great plagues he brought against the Egyptians, and Jehovah passed over the sons of Israel the night he struck the firstborn. Therefore, they were to celebrate that night of salvation as a feast day.

Their new calendar

When Jehovah first commanded the Passover feast, he said to Moses, **"This month shall be to you the beginning of months; it shall be the first month of the year to you"** (Exodus 12:2). Their calendar system is very different from our modern Gregorian calendar. Their calendar was based upon lunar cycles and not solar cycles, and that complicates things. For example, I did a little research on the Internet about when their year begins, and I found these comments at www.jewfaq.org:

"The Jewish calendar is primarily lunar, with each month beginning on the new moon, when the first sliver of moon becomes visible after the dark of the moon. In ancient times, the new months used to be determined by observation. When people observed the new moon, they would notify the Sanhedrin [who] would…send out messengers to tell people when the month began.

"The problem with strictly lunar calendars is that there are approximately 12.4 lunar months in every solar year, so a 12-month lunar calendar loses about 11 days every year and a 13-month lunar gains about 19 days every year. The months on such a calendar "drift" relative to the solar year. On a 12 month calendar, the month of Nissan, which is supposed to occur in the Spring, occurs 11 days earlier each year, eventually occurring in the Winter, the Fall, the Summer, and then the Spring again. To compensate for this drift, an extra month was occasionally added: a second month of Adar. The month of Nissan would occur 11 days earlier for two or three years, and then would jump forward 29 or 30 days, balancing out the drift."

That explains things such as why Passover fell on March 26 in 1994 and on April 21 in 1997, almost four weeks difference. Another website revealed to me the complexity of determining their calendar. Here is what I found at www.twilightbridge.com:

"Determining the first day of the calendar year, Rosh HaShanah, on 1 Tishri:

1. The new year starts on the day of the new moon that occurs about 354 days (or 384 days if the previous year was a leap year) after 1 Tishri of the previous year
2. If the new moon occurs after noon on that day, delay the new year by one day. (Because in that case the new crescent moon will not be visible until the next day.)
3. If this would cause the new year to start on a Sunday, Wednesday, or Friday, delay it by one day. (Because we want to avoid that Yom Kippur (10 Tishri) falls on a Friday or Sunday, and that Hoshanah Rabba (21 Tishri) falls on a sabbath (Saturday)).
4. If two consecutive years start 356 days apart (an illegal year length), delay the start of the first year by two days.
5. If two consecutive years start 382 days apart (an illegal year length), delay the start of the second year by one day.

"Note: Rule 4 can only come into play if the first year was supposed to start on a Tuesday. Therefore a two day delay is used rather that a one day delay, as the year must not start on a Wednesday as stated in rule 3."

I found another website (http://www.uwm.edu) that said, "The Jewish year has six possible lengths: 353, 354, 355, 383, 384, 385 days, according to the day and time of the new year lunation, and position in the Metonic cycle." That explains the above words about illegal year lengths. The author of that quotation had created a computer program to generate a Jewish calendar.

Nevertheless, whether the Jewish calendar is used or the common Gregorian calendar, Passover falls on different days of the week from year to year. For example, it fell on Sat-

urday in 2001 but on Wednesday in 2002. If the ancient Israelites had created their calendar so that Passover always came on a certain day of the week, then all of their weeks could not have been seven days long. And since the regular sabbath day was always the seventh day of the week, it seems highly unlikely they would have made their calendar that way.

The first Instructions

Here are all the regulations Jehovah first gave that were required of the Passover:

- Each head of a household was to take a lamb in the tenth day of the first month.
- If the household was too small, then two households were to combine for the feast.
- The lamb was to be without blemish.
- It had to be a male.
- It had to be a year old (some claim that meant any age up to a year).
- It had to be taken from the sheep or the goats.
- They had to keep it until the fourteenth day of that month.
- They had to kill it at evening.
- They had to sprinkle some of its blood on the two side-posts and on the lintel of the house.
- They had to roast the flesh with fire. It could not be eaten raw or boiled.
- They had to eat the flesh with unleavened bread and bitter herbs that night.
- They had to roast it with all its parts, including the head, legs, and inward parts.
- They could leave none of it until morning. Anything remaining was to be burnt.
- They had to eat it fully clothed, with their loins girded, shoes on their feet, and staff in hand.
- And they had to eat it in haste.

Later instructions

Immediately after that first Passover Jehovah gave Moses further instructions about observing the Passover feast, which are summarized below:

- No foreigner was to eat of it.
- A servant purchased by an Israelite and circumcised was to eat of it.
- No sojourner or hired servant or any uncircumcised man was to eat of it.
- If a sojourner was circumcised and became a citizen (a proselyte) he was to eat of it.
- It was not to be carried out of the house (except perhaps to burn).
- No bone of it was to be broken.
- All the congregation of Israel was to keep it.
- The law was to apply to the home-born and to strangers who traveled among them (probably meaning proselytes and alien Israelites).

Jehovah said they were to keep the Passover feast each year. He said, **"Thou shall therefore keep this ordinance in its season from year to year"** (Exodus 13:10). He also commanded them to teach their sons the reason for the feast; namely, to celebrate their salvation when Jehovah smote the firstborn of the Egyptians but passed over their houses.

It was an important celebration. And whoever failed to observe that feast was to be "cut off from his people," which almost certainly meant being put to death. Therefore, a provision in the law was made for whoever was unable to participate (because of uncleanness or being on a journey) to celebrate it one month later.

The Feast of Unleavened Bread

One passage about the feast of unleavened bread says: **"In the first month, on the fourteenth day of the month at evening, is Jehovah's Passover. And on the fifteenth day of the same month is the feast of unleavened bread to Jehovah. Ye shall eat unleavened bread seven days"** (Leviticus 23:5-6). However, when Jehovah first gave the command he said: **"And ye shall observe the *feast of* unleavened bread, for in this selfsame day I have brought your armies out of the land of Egypt. Therefore ye shall observe this day throughout your generations by an ordinance forever. In the first *month*, on the fourteenth day of the month at evening, ye shall eat unleavened bread, until the twenty-first day of the month at evening"** (Exodus 12:17-18).

They were required to eat the lamb of the Passover on the fourteenth day of the first month, and they were to eat it with unleavened bread. They were also to continue eating unleavened bread for six more days. The seven days of eating unleavened bread included Passover, and those seven days comprised the feast of unleavened bread. That means Passover began the feast of unleavened bread. Hence, the two feasts were called one or the other, as this passage from the New Testament says: **"Now the feast of unleavened bread was coming near, which is called Passover"** (Luke 22:1).

They were also to make animal sacrifices on each of those seven days. The offerings were to be **"two young bullocks, and one ram, and seven he-lambs a year old (they shall be to you without blemish), and their meal offering, fine flour mingled with oil. Three tenth parts ye shall offer for a bullock, and two tenth parts for the ram, a tenth part shall thou offer for every lamb of the seven lambs. Also one he-goat for a sin offering, to make atonement for you"** (Numbers 28:19-22).

They were originally required to eat the Passover in their own dwellings. However, that was changed. They were commanded not to eat the Passover locally. They were to sacrifice it **"in the place which Jehovah your God shall choose to cause his name to dwell there"** (Deuteronomy 12:11). And that place was eventually Jerusalem. When Moses gave that command, he said, **"Thou may not sacrifice the Passover within any of thy gates, which Jehovah thy God gives thee, but at the place which Jehovah thy God shall choose to cause his name to dwell in, there thou shall sacrifice the Passover at evening, at the going down of the sun, at the season that thou came forth out of Egypt. And thou shall roast and eat it in the place which Jehovah thy God shall choose, and thou shall turn in the morning, and go to thy tents. Six days thou shall eat unleavened bread, and on the seventh day shall be a solemn assembly to Jehovah thy God. Thou shall do no work"** (Deuteronomy 16:5-8). The tents they were told to return to must have been their temporary accommodations at the chosen place.

The Feast of Weeks

They were commanded to number seven sabbaths or fifty days after bringing their sheaf of the first-fruits. And on that fiftieth day they were to celebrate the feast of weeks, which is also called the feast of harvest. There was no specific date set in the law for that feast. However, by the time of the New Testament that day had become fixed as the fiftieth day after Passover. And in the New Testament it was called the day of Pentecost, which is Greek for fiftieth. See Part 2:6 for more about the first-fruits and the feast of weeks.

The feast of weeks was to be a holy convocation with special offerings made for that one day. It was also to be a day of rejoicing, as the following passage says, **"And thou shall keep the feast of weeks to Jehovah thy God with a tribute of a freewill offering from thy hand, which thou shall give, according as Jehovah thy God blesses thee. And thou shall rejoice before Jehovah thy God, thou, and thy son, and thy daughter, and thy man-servant, and thy maid-servant, and the Levite who is within thy gates, and the sojourner, and the fatherless, and the widow, who are in the midst of thee, in the place which Jehovah thy God shall choose to cause his name to dwell there, and thou shall remember that thou were a bondman in Egypt. And thou shall observe and do these statutes"** (Deuteronomy 16:10-12). Indeed, all of their feast days were to be times of rejoicing for them. God no doubt wanted everything associated with him to be positive.

Blowing of Trumpets

Jehovah commanded, **"In the seventh month, on the first day of the month, shall be a solemn rest to you, a memorial of blowing of trumpets, a holy convocation. Ye shall do no job work, and ye shall offer an offering made by fire to Jehovah"** (Leviticus 23:23-25). That was the middle of their year, which is September or October of our common calendar system. However, it is New Year's day for modern Jews. They call it the beginning of their civil year, in contrast to the one commanded by Jehovah just before the Exodus, which the Jews now call the religious year. Nevertheless, there is nothing stated explicitly in the Bible about two different calendar years.

There are several reasons why the Jews make their new year in the seventh month. One passage they use to justify it is the following: **"... the feast of ingathering at the end of the year, when thou gather in thy labors out of the field"** (Exodus 23:14-17). The feast of ingathering began the fifteenth day of the seventh month, and it was "at the end of the year." However, that statement may simply have referred to the end of their annual agricultural harvests, and was never intended to refer to a different calendar.

The purpose of the day of blowing of trumpets is never stated in the Bible. Nor are any details given about that day, such as where they were to blow the trumpets or how often they were to blow them. They may have been blown throughout Israel to prepare the people for the day of atonement, which was ten days afterward. The day of atonement was one of the most important days of their year, if not the most important. It was the one day of the year when they were all commanded to fast.

Jehovah had commanded them at another time to make two silver trumpets and use them for various signaling purposes. He said further about them, **"Also in the day of your gladness, and in your set feasts, and in the beginnings of your months, ye shall blow the trumpets over your burnt offerings, and over the sacrifices of your peace offerings. And they shall be to you for a memorial before your God: I am Jehovah your God"** (Numbers 10:10). Hence, the day of blowing of trumpets was by no means the only time trumpets were blown. Moreover, the Bible tells of other trumpets that were used besides the two silver one's commanded by Jehovah. See, for example, Joshua 6:4.

The Day of Atonement

The day of atonement was on the tenth day of the seventh month. And it was a very important holy convocation. It was the one day in the year the high priest entered into the most holy place, and that involved an elaborate ritual. It was also the one day in the year they were all commanded to fast. And it was the day the scapegoat was sent into the wilderness.

Regarding that day, Jehovah said to Moses, **"... on the tenth day of this seventh month is the day of atonement. It shall be a holy convocation to you, and ye shall afflict your souls, and ye shall offer an offering made by fire to Jehovah. And ye shall do no manner of work in that same day, for it is a day of atonement, to make atonement for you before Jehovah your God. For whatever soul it be who shall not be afflicted in that same day, he shall be cut off from his people. And whatever soul it be who does any manner of work in that same day, that soul I will destroy from among his people. Ye shall do no manner of work"** (Leviticus 23:26-32). To afflict their souls meant to fast. They were also commanded to offer special animal sacrifices on that day.

The Feast of Booths

The feast of booths is also called the feast of tabernacles or the feast of ingatherings. And that feast was to last seven days. Many animal sacrifices were to be made on each of those days. More animals were offered on the altar during this feast than for any of the others. And it was to be followed on the eighth day with another holy convocation with more animal sacrifices.

It was called the feast of ingatherings because it was to begin on the fifteenth day of their seventh month (September or October), which was after their harvesting. For Moses said, **"Thou shall keep the feast of tabernacles seven days after thou have gathered in from thy threshing-floor and from thy winepress. And thou shall rejoice in thy feast, thou, and thy son, and thy daughter, and thy man-servant, and thy maid-servant, and the Levite, and the sojourner, and the fatherless, and the widow, who are within thy gates. Seven days thou shall keep a feast to Jehovah thy God in the place which Jehovah shall choose, because Jehovah thy God will bless thee in all thine increase, and in all the work of thy hands, and thou shall be altogether joyful"** (Deuteronomy 16:13-15).

It was called the feast of booths or tabernacles because they were to live in temporary dwellings for those seven days. Jehovah gave the reason for dwelling in booths when he

said, **"On the first day shall be a solemn rest, and on the eighth day shall be a solemn rest. And ye shall take to you on the first day the fruit of goodly trees, branches of palm trees, and boughs of thick trees, and willows of the brook, and ye shall rejoice before Jehovah your God seven days. And ye shall keep it a feast to Jehovah seven days in the year. It is a statute forever throughout your generations. Ye shall keep it in the seventh month. Ye shall dwell in booths seven days. All who are home-born in Israel shall dwell in booths, that your generations may know that I made the sons of Israel to dwell in booths, when I brought them out of the land of Egypt. I am Jehovah your God"** (Leviticus 23:39-43).

No Christian Holy Days

No holy convocations or scheduled feast days were ever commanded to be a part of the new covenant of Christ. Indeed, Paul even rebuked his brothers at Galatia for wanting to incorporate those laws of Moses into the new covenant. Among other things, he said to them, **"Ye observe days, and months, and times, and years. I am afraid of you, lest somehow I have labored toward you in vain"** (Galatians 4:10-11). Christians are under the law of liberty, and are not bound to observe **"days, and months, and times, and years,"** as were the sons of Israel under the law of Moses.

That does not mean, however, that celebrating such days on a voluntary basis is forbidden. We are under the law of liberty, and can decide for ourselves individually. For Paul wrote to the church in Rome, saying, **"One man prefers one day above another, another man prefers every day. Let each man be fully persuaded in his own mind. He who regards the day, regards it for the Lord. And he who does not regard the day, for the Lord he does not regard it. And he who eats, eats for the Lord, for he expresses thanks to God. And he who does not eat, for the Lord he does not eat, and expresses thanks to God"** (Romans 14:5-6). And that includes Sunday, which many Christians wrongfully consider a holy day. There are no holy days in the new covenant of Christ. Other so called "holy days," such as Christmas and Easter, are traditions that should be considered strictly voluntary.

Nevertheless, in my opinion there is some value in celebrating an occasional time of joint feasting and rejoicing in honor of God, although it should never be compulsory. Such times can arouse enthusiasm for God and his righteousness, which can encourage revival in the spirits of the weak. That may have been one purpose of the feast days commanded in the law. Too often, however, enthusiasm aroused that way is not long lasting unless it is reinforced in other ways. Another purpose of those feast days was no doubt to help them maintain a positive attitude toward Jehovah. For those were to be times of rejoicing while honoring and worshiping him.

There is evidence in the New Testament that early Christians had some times of joint feasting and rejoicing. For in his letter in the New Testament Jude mentioned "love-feasts" when they feasted together. And that could not have meant the time of the Lord's supper when they were to remember the sacrifice of Jesus, because Paul rebuked the church at Corinth for making that memorial supper a time of feasting for themselves.

Part 2:5

THE PRIESTS

The sons of Israel apparently made priests for themselves before the law of Moses. Here is one passage that mentions them just before God gave the ten commandments from mount Sinai: **"And Jehovah said to Moses, Go down, command the people, lest they break through to Jehovah to gaze, and many of them perish. And let the priests also, who come near to Jehovah, sanctify themselves, lest Jehovah break forth upon them"** (Exodus 19:21-22). The Bible mentions Melchizedek king of Salem who was "**priest of God Most High"** (Genesis 14:18) at the time of Abraham. And Moses' father-in-law was called the priest of Midian. However, there is no record God ever commanded any before Moses.

After Jehovah led the sons of Israel to mount Sinai, he said to them, **"Ye have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles' wings, and brought you to myself. Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be my own possession from among all peoples, for all the earth is mine, and ye shall be to me a kingdom of priests, and a holy nation"** (Exodus 19:4-6).

God had originally planned to select all the firstborn sons of Israel to be their priests after the Exodus. However, after they worshiped the golden calf, he chose the tribe of Levi instead because they rallied with Moses against the idolaters. Nevertheless, they were not anointed until after the tabernacle was built. The first commands Jehovah gave were about high priests, who were to be Aaron and his sons. Those instructions were given to Moses on mount Sinai after describing how the tabernacle was to be built. And the first things he commanded were about the garments for them.

THE HIGH PRIESTS

Their garments

Jehovah told Moses to take all who were wise-hearted, whom Jehovah had filled with the spirit of wisdom, and they were to make garments for Aaron and his sons. Jehovah said, **"And these are the garments which they shall make: a breastplate, and an ephod, and a robe, and a tunic of checker work, a miter, and a sash. And they shall make holy garments for Aaron thy brother, and his sons, that he may minister to me in the priest's office"** (Exodus 28:1-4). Jehovah then gave detailed instructions about how all of those items of clothing were to be made. Those for Aaron, the high priest, were to be very beautiful and ornate.

The breastplate was to have twelve different kinds of precious stones on it, four rows of three stones each. And each stone was to have the name of one of the sons of Israel engraved on it. The breastplate was also to have the Urim and the Thummim in it, so that it would be upon Aaron's heart when he went in before Jehovah. Thus the record says, **"Aaron shall bear the judgment of the sons of Israel upon his heart before Jehovah continually"** (Exodus 28:30). The Urim and the Thummim were mysterious objects that

were used to inquire of God about decisions to make. It was apparently something like casting lots, for the proverb says, **"The lot is cast into the lap, but the whole disposing thereof is of Jehovah"** (Proverbs 16:33).

The ephod was to have two shoulder-pieces, each one having a jewel engraved with the names of six of the sons of Israel. Small bells of gold were to be attached to the skirt of the ephod so that whenever the priest walked inside the tabernacle he could be heard. Also there was to be a plate of gold with an engraved signet, HOLY TO JEHOVAH, which was to be upon the forehead of the miter. Those were some of the details of the priest's garments.

Jehovah also gave instructions about the garments for Aaron' sons, which were tunics, sashes, and head-coverings. They were much less ornate than the garments for Aaron. Finally, Jehovah commanded breeches be made for Aaron and his sons as well. They were **"to cover the flesh of their nakedness, from the loins even to the thighs"** when they went in the tent of meeting or came near the altar to minister (Exodus 28:42).

Their consecration

Here is what Jehovah commanded Moses for the consecration of Aaron and his sons to minister in the priests office:

1. Moses was to take one young bullock and two rams without blemish, and unleavened bread, and cakes unleavened mingled with oil, and wafers unleavened anointed with oil, of fine wheaten flour.
2. Moses was to put them into one basket, and bring them in the basket, with the bullock and the two rams.
3. Moses was to bring Aaron and his sons to the door of the tent of meeting.
4. Moses was to wash them with water.
5. Moses was to put the holy garments upon Aaron.
6. Moses was to pour the anointing oil upon his head.
7. Moses was to put the garments on Aaron's sons.
8. Aaron and his sons were to lay their hands upon the head of the bullock.
9. Moses was to kill the bullock at the door of the tent of meeting.
10. Moses was to put its blood upon the horns of the altar with his finger.
11. Moses was to pour out the rest at the base of the altar.
12. Moses was to burn all the fat upon the altar.
13. The rest of the bullock was to be burned outside the camp.
14. Aaron and his sons were to lay their hands upon the head of one of the rams.
15. Moses was to kill it.
16. Moses was to sprinkle its blood round about upon the altar.
17. Moses was to cut it in pieces and burn the whole upon the altar.
18. Aaron and his sons were to lay their hands upon the head of the other ram.
19. Moses was to kill it.
20. Moses was to take of its blood, and put it upon the tip of the right ear of Aaron, and upon the thumb of his right hand, and upon the great toe of his right foot.

21. Moses was to take of the blood and do the same thing with Aaron's sons.
22. Moses was to sprinkle the blood upon the altar round about.
23. Moses was to take of the blood upon the altar, and of the anointing oil, and sprinkle it upon Aaron, and upon his garments, and upon his sons, and upon the garments of his sons with him.
24. Moses was to take from the ram the fat, and the fat tail, and the fat that covers the inwards, and the caul of the liver, and the two kidneys, and the fat that is upon them, and the right thigh, and one loaf of bread, and one cake of oiled bread, and one wafer, out of the basket of unleavened bread that is before Jehovah, and put the whole upon the hands of Aaron, and upon the hands of his sons.
25. They were to wave them for a wave offering before Jehovah.
26. Moses was then to take them from their hands, and burn them on the altar upon the burnt offering.
27. Moses was to take the breast of Aaron's ram of consecration, and wave it for a wave offering before Jehovah, and it was be his portion.
28. Moses was to take the ram of consecration, and boil its flesh in a holy place.
29. Aaron and his sons were to eat the flesh of the ram, and the bread that was in the basket, at the door of the tent of meeting.
30. The consecration was to last seven days. A bullock was to be offered for atonement each day. Perhaps also a ram, but the scriptures are not clear about that.

Moses was also to make atonement for the altar seven days, and sanctify it.

Restrictions for them

Jehovah commanded Aaron to abstain from all alcoholic beverages whenever he went into the tent of meeting. He said it was **"that ye may make a distinction between the holy and the common, and between the unclean and the clean, and that ye may teach the sons of Israel all the statutes which Jehovah has spoken to them by Moses"** (Leviticus 10:10-11).

Regarding marriage, Jehovah said a priest could only take a virgin of his own people for a wife. He could not take a profane woman or a non-virgin of any kind: a widow, a divorcee, or a harlot. He said that would profane his seed among his people. Such marriages often have problem children, and apparently God did not want any priest to have that risk.

None of the high priests (sons of Aaron) were allowed to defile themselves for the dead, except for their near kin, such as a mother or father, a son or daughter, a brother or a sister if she was unmarried. They were not allowed to make baldness on their head, or shave off the corner of their beard, or make any cuttings of their flesh.

The anointed high priest was not allowed to let the hair of his head go loose (which probably meant disheveled), nor tear his clothes, nor go in to any dead body, nor defile himself for his father or his mother. And he was to remain in the sanctuary area.

Some of the things the sons of Israel devoted to Jehovah were used as food for the priests. Giving things to Jehovah made them holy. And Aaron and his sons, the high priests, were

not allowed to eat of any of those things when they became unclean. They could eat only after bathing themselves and waiting until evening. Neither were they allowed to approach any of the holy things if they became unclean. Jehovah said it would profane his holy name. It was a serious violation punished by being cut off from before him, which almost certainly meant the death penalty. The text also says they were forbidden to eat non-slaughtered flesh, but that was true of all the sons of Israel.

Not only were the (high) priests to avoid the holy things of Jehovah if they were unclean, but the priests were also forbidden to make any offerings if they had any kind of blemish. Blemished animals were not allowed to be sacrificial offerings, and blemished priests could not make any offerings. Examples of blemished priests were the following: being lame, having a flat nose, being a dwarf, having been stabbed. Such a man was allowed to eat the bread of his God, but he was not allowed to enter the tabernacle or come near the altar. Jehovah said it would profane his sanctuaries.

Also if the daughter of a priest played the harlot (practiced fornication) Moses said she profaned her father. And the penalty was for her to be burnt with fire. That probably meant death. However, some believe it meant being burned to create a visible scar.

Their role

Aaron and his sons were given charge of the tabernacle and the altar of burnt offering. They alone were allowed to enter the tabernacle or make offerings on the altar. Anyone else who tried was to be put to death. The other Levites were to assist them, but never in the tabernacle or to burn offerings on the altar.

Jehovah said to Aaron, **"Thou and thy sons and thy fathers' house with thee shall bear the iniquity of the sanctuary, and thou and thy sons with thee shall bear the iniquity of your priesthood"** (Numbers 18:1-3). Bearing the iniquity of the sanctuary probably referred to their main duties. Which were to supervise all the rituals required there for atonement of the sins of the people.

Jehovah also said to Aaron, **"And thy brothers also, the tribe of Levi, the tribe of thy father, bring thou near with thee, that they may be joined to thee, and minister to thee, but thou and thy sons with thee shall be before the tent of the testimony. And they shall keep thy charge, and the charge of all the tent. Only they shall not come near to the vessels of the sanctuary and to the altar, that they not die, neither they, nor ye"** (Numbers 18:2-3). Not only was anyone not a son of Aaron to be put to death for violating those restrictions, but apparently any son of Aaron who allowed any such a violation was also to die.

The priests were also to bless and encourage the sons of Israel. Jehovah even commanded a special benediction, saying to Moses, **"Speak to Aaron and to his sons, saying, This way ye shall bless the sons of Israel: Ye shall say to them, Jehovah bless thee, and keep thee. Jehovah make his face to shine upon thee, and be gracious to thee. Jehovah lift up his countenance upon thee, and give thee peace. So shall they put my name upon the sons of Israel, and I will bless them"** (Numbers 6:23-27). There was no

command about how often or when the priests were to utter that benediction. Moses uttered a short one every time the Israelites broke camp, and a shorter one when they made camp during their journeys in the wilderness. The one for the priests was probably uttered whenever there was an appropriate time.

Jehovah also commanded the priests to encourage the warriors of Israel when they were preparing to combat a powerful enemy. In addition to other words of encouragement, the priest was to say to them, **"Hear, O Israel, ye draw near this day to battle against your enemies. Let not your heart faint. Fear not, nor tremble, neither be ye frightened at them. For Jehovah your God is he who goes with you, to fight for you against your enemies, to save you"** (Deuteronomy 20:3-4).

The priests were also given the role of judges. See Part 2:25 under the heading *Make Judges and Officers* for more about that.

Their wages

Jehovah did not speak with Aaron often. He usually told Moses what to tell Aaron. However, the text says Jehovah spoke to Aaron when he told him what his reward would be for his service. Besides giving Aaron and his sons the gift of the Levites for helpers, Jehovah gave him many other things for his wages, which I list below:

- Every meal offering, sin offering, and trespass offering. Every male of them could eat of it.
- The heave offerings and the wave offerings of the gifts of the sons of Israel. His sons and daughters could eat of it. Everyone who was clean in his house could eat of it.
- All the best of the oil, and all the best of the vintage, and of the grain, the first-fruits of them which the people gave to Jehovah.
- The first-ripe fruits of all that was in their land, which the people brought to Jehovah, was to be his. Everyone who was clean in his house could eat of it.
- Everything devoted in Israel.
- Everything that opened the womb, both of man and beast. However, the firstborn of man and of unclean beasts were to be redeemed. The money for redemption was to be five shekels, and it was to be given to the priests. The clean beasts were to be burnt on the altar except for some of the flesh which he could eat.
- Jehovah said to Aaron that he had no inheritance in their land nor any portion among them. Jehovah said he was Aaron's portion and his inheritance among the sons of Israel.

Then Jehovah told him he was giving to the sons of Levi all the tithe in Israel for an inheritance, in return for their service which they serve. Jehovah also commanded the Levites to take of the tithe given them, and offer up a heave offering of it for Jehovah, a tithe of the tithe. And they were to give that to Aaron the priest. Therefore, Aaron and his sons were to receive the best of the best.

Another law given later in Deuteronomy says the priests were to be given **"the shoulder, and the two cheeks, and the maw. The first-fruits of thy grain, of thy new wine, and**

of thine oil, and the first of the fleece of thy sheep, thou shall give him" (Deuteronomy 18:3-4).

Those were the laws. However, since Jehovah was his inheritance, then whenever the sons of Israel forsook Jehovah, Aaron was not going to receive his wages. For when the sons of Israel forsook Jehovah, they would forsake his law as well, including the parts about providing for the priests. Therefore, it was to his advantage and the advantage of the other Levites to continually encourage the sons of Israel to be faithful to Jehovah. Jehovah may have commanded Aaron's support be given that way in order to encourage him and his sons to promote the faithfulness of the people.

Nevertheless, the history of Israel tells how often they forsook Jehovah and his law, including their support for the Levites For example, even after returning from their Babylonian exile the Jews were quick to neglect the Levites. Nehemiah, a leader of the Jews when they returned from Babylonian captivity, tells about that. He had been gone a while from Jerusalem, and this is what he said when he returned: **"And I perceived that the portions of the Levites had not been given them, so that the Levites and the singers, who did the work, had fled each one to his field. Then I contended with the rulers, and said, Why is the house of God forsaken? And I gathered them together, and set them in their place"** (Nehemiah 13:10-11).

The Levites

Jehovah chose the Levites to be his priests to serve the functions of his sanctuary. Aaron was a Levite, and he and his sons were chosen as the high priests. The other Levites were assigned to help him. There was apparently no age limit to the service of the high priests. Although only one at a time could serve in the office of the anointed high priest. For the other Levites, however, Jehovah restricted the time of their service to be between twenty-five to fifty years of age (see Numbers 8:24). Jehovah had earlier commanded to take from each of the three families of the Levites **"from thirty years old and upward even to fifty years old"** (Numbers 4:47) to do the work of the tent of meeting. The reason for the five year difference between the starting ages has been variously explained by commentators. The one that seems most reasonable says the first five years of service was like an apprenticeship when they were not allowed to perform all the normal functions. That may fit with what the passage says about those after they reached fifty years. The wording says they were to **"minister with their brothers in the tent of meeting"** but it suggests their service was supervision only. Perhaps they also served to teach those who were twenty five to thirty years old. The elder Levites were not allowed to do any work, but apparently were to supervise their brothers and perhaps teach the younger men.

The Levites were to have no portion or inheritance with Israel. Their sustenance was to come from the offerings made to Jehovah, including the tithe. Jehovah said he was their inheritance. However, they were given forty-eight cities in which to dwell. And their houses could only be leased, never sold permanently. They were also given suburbs surrounding their cities, the land of which could never be sold.

Most of the Levites lived in one of those forty-eight cities. However, Jehovah gave provision for anyone of them who wanted to serve at the chosen place where the altar was. He said, **"And if a Levite comes from any of thy gates out of all Israel, where he sojourns, and comes with all the desire of his soul to the place which Jehovah shall choose, then he shall minister in the name of Jehovah his God, as all his brothers the Levites do who stand there before Jehovah. They shall have like portions to eat, besides that which comes of the sale of his patrimony"** (Deuteronomy 18:6-8).

Since most of the Levites did not minister in the name of Jehovah at the chosen place, they were free to occupy themselves in other ways. As stated in the passage from Nehemiah some of them had fields they could grow crops on. Other passages in the Bible suggest they hired themselves to do other work. Here is one such passage: **"And there was a young man out of Bethlehem-judah, of the family of Judah, who was a Levite, and he sojourned there. And the man departed out of the city, out of Bethlehem-judah, to sojourn where he could find *a place*"** (Judges 17:7-8).

The Priesthood

The word priest in the law most often refers to the high priests, the sons of Aaron. However, it also refers to the men of the entire tribe of Levi after Jehovah selected them in place of the firstborn of Israel. Therefore, who is meant by the priests in the various passages must be determined by the context. That all the male Levites were considered priests can be seen in the following passage: **"The priests the Levites, *even* all the tribe of Levi, shall have no portion nor inheritance with Israel. They shall eat the offerings of Jehovah made by fire, and his inheritance. And they shall have no inheritance among their brothers. Jehovah is their inheritance as he has spoken to them"** (Deuteronomy 18:1-2).

Reference to the priesthood also sometimes refers to the high priests and sometimes to all of the Levites. For example, when Moses was facing Korah's rebellion, he said to the Levite rebels, **"*Is it* a small thing to you, that the God of Israel has separated you from the congregation of Israel, to bring you near to himself, to do the service of the tabernacle of Jehovah, and to stand before the congregation to minister to them, and that he has brought thee near, and all thy brothers the sons of Levi with thee? And ye seek the priesthood also?"** (Numbers 16:9-10).

Notice he contrasted the service of the Levites with the priesthood. However, after the sons of Israel invaded their promised land, Joshua applied the word priesthood broadly to include to all the Levites (not meaning they all had the same rights): **"For the Levites have no portion among you, for the priesthood of Jehovah is their inheritance ..."** (Joshua 18:7). And not only were the priests to be in charge of the service of the sanctuary of Jehovah and of the offerings at the altar, but they were to be the final judges of the land. For Moses said of the sons of Levi (not just of Aaron), **"... Jehovah thy God has chosen them to minister to him, and to bless in the name of Jehovah, and according to their word shall every controversy and every stroke be"** (Deuteronomy 21:5).

The Christian Priesthood

Christ our high priest

The New Testament teaches that Jesus Christ is the new high priest of God. There is much said about that in the book of Hebrews, which is discussed in Part 3:9 of this book. Here is a passage from the first part of Hebrews that describes how Jesus is now the high priest of God for us: **"... Jesus who has been made a little something less than the agents, who, because of the suffering of death, has been crowned with glory and honor, so that by the grace of God he would taste of death for every man. For it was fitting for him, through whom are all things, and because of whom are all things, having brought many sons to glory, to make the Pathfinder of their salvation fully perfect through sufferings.**

"For both he who sanctifies and those being sanctified are all of one, because of which reason he is not ashamed to call them brothers, saying, I will declare thy name to my brothers. In the midst of the congregation I will sing praise to thee. And again, I will be a man who has trusted in him. And again, Behold, I and the children that God has given me.

"Since therefore the children have partaken of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise shared the same things, so that through death he might make him who has the power of death impotent, that is, the devil. And he might liberate these, as many as throughout all their lifetime were deserving of bondage, with a specter of death. For he certainly did not embrace agents, but he embraced the seed of Abraham.

"Therefore he was obligated to be made like his brothers in accordance with all things, so that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in things toward God, in order to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. For in that he himself has suffered, having been tempted, he is able to help those being tempted.

"Because of which, holy brothers, companions of a heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our affirmation, Jesus Christ, who was faithful to him who appointed him, as also was Moses in all his house. For this man was considered worthy of more glory than Moses, by so much as he who built it has more esteem than the house" (Hebrews 2:9-3:3).

The author of the book of Hebrews also explains the great superiority of the priesthood of Christ. For it is an eternal priesthood where he serves in the heavenly sanctuary of God. He also described how the tabernacle for the sons of Israel was a model of the heavenly sanctuary: **"Now a summation about the things being spoken is, we have such a high priest who was seated at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens, a minister of the holy things, and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord erected and not man. For every high priest is appointed in order to offer both gifts and sacrifices, whereupon it is necessary for this man also to have something that he may offer** [which was his own blood for our atonement]**.**

"For certainly if he were on earth, he would not even be a priest, there being the priests who offer the gifts according to the law, who serve for an example and shadow of the heavenly things. Just as Moses who was divinely warned while going to complete the tabernacle, for he says, See thou make all things according to the pattern that was shown thee on the mountain. But now he has obtained a superior ministry, by so much as he is also the mediator of a superior covenant, which has been enacted upon superior promises" (Hebrews 8:1-6).

The priesthood of Christians

The New Testament also tells how we the disciples of Christ are the new priests of God. Our duty is to serve God as ministers of the new covenant of Christ in whatever way we are able. Whether it be simply to serve as an example of how God wants us to live, or to raise up righteous children, or to promote his good news by teaching. Paul was chosen to be an apostle of Christ, and he spoke of how he served the new covenant of God like a priest: **"But I wrote more boldly to you, brothers, in part, as reminding you because of the grace that was given to me by God, for me to be a minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles, serving the good news of God like a priest, so that the offering up of the Gentiles might become acceptable, being sanctified in the Holy Spirit"** (Romans 15:15-16).

Peter wrote about how all of the disciples of Christ are priests, when he said, **"But ye are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for an acquired possession, so that ye might broadly proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. Men formerly not a people, but now are a people of God. Men who had not obtained mercy, but who now have obtained mercy"** (First Peter 2:9-10).

In the book of revelation the apostle John also testified about our priesthood. Among the first words in that book are these: **"John, to the seven congregations in Asia: Grace to you and peace from God, who is and who was and who is coming, and from the seven Spirits that are before his throne, and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn of the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth. To him who loves us and washed us from our sins by his blood and made us a kingdom, priests to his God and Father, to him is the glory and the dominion into the ages of the ages. Truly"** (Revelation 1:4-6).

Here is something else John describes in Revelation: **"And I saw in the midst of the throne and of the four beings, and in the midst of the elders, a Lamb standing, like it had been killed, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God being sent forth into all the earth. And he came and took it out of the right hand of him who sits on the throne.**

"And when he took the book, the four beings and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb, each having a harp and golden bowls containing incense, which are the prayers of the sanctified. And they sing a new song, saying, Thou are worthy to

take the book and to open the seals of it, because thou were killed and purchased us from God by thy blood, out of every tribe, and tongue, and people, and nation. And thou made them kings and priests to our God, and they will reign over the earth" (Revelation 5:6-10).

By his own blood sacrifice Jesus redeemed his disciples from every tribe, and tongue, and people, and nation. And he made us kings and priests to our God, and we will reign over the earth. We will reign over the new earth that will replace this sinful one when it is finally destroyed by fire before the great day of judgment.

Part 2:6

SACRIFICES AND OFFERINGS

Laws about sacrifices and offerings comprise a large part of the law of Moses. The first one-fourth of the book of Leviticus consists entirely of laws about when and how to give burnt offerings. Indeed, more of the text of the four books of the law are about offerings than for any other topic. The law prescribed offerings for different kinds of things, and for different times and purposes. And there is much detail given about how they were all to be done. There was also an emphasis on the use of blood in their animal sacrifices. For example, blood from offerings was to be placed on the high priest during his consecration. And it was even sprinkled in the sanctuary on certain occasions. Blood sacrifices and offerings comprised the primary activity of the tabernacle and the temple that replaced it. That activity must have continually sent out a pleasant aroma like that near a modern steakhouse.

There were five basic kinds of offerings on the altar: burnt offerings, meal offerings, peace offerings, sin offerings, and trespass offerings. The only kind of animals acceptable were the clean ones (edible) from their herds and their flocks, and from turtle doves and young pigeons. Animals such as donkeys and horses were considered unclean. The law says that only the priests could burn on the altar, but usually the man who offered the animal was required to kill and butcher it. There were also regulations about when and what to burn or not burn with their offerings.

STATUTES THAT WERE NOT GOOD

Before describing more about the laws of offerings I want to show how they were not something God ever preferred. Those statutes and ordinances were given to the sons of Israel after their sin with the golden calf. And there is evidence Jehovah did not intend at the beginning to give them. They were apparently imposed upon the sons of Israel because of their continual rebellion.

For example, as recorded in the book of Jeremiah, Jehovah said to the sons of Israel, **"For I spoke not to your fathers, nor commanded them in the day that I brought them out of the land of Egypt, concerning burnt offerings or sacrifices. But this thing I commanded them, saying, Hearken to my voice, and I will be your God, and ye shall be my people. And walk ye in all the way that I command you, that it may be well with you. But they hearkened not, nor inclined their ear, but walked in *their own* counsels, in the stubbornness of their evil heart, and went backward, and not forward"** (Jeremiah 7:22-24).

Jehovah said he did not speak to them concerning burnt offerings or sacrifices when he brought them out of Egypt. What he told them was to hearken to him, and walk in all the way he commanded them. It is obedience to his righteousness, to things such as the ten commandments that Jehovah wanted then and that he wants now. It is the answer the prophet Micah received when he asked what Jehovah wanted: **"With what shall I come before Jehovah, and bow myself before the high God? Shall I come before him with**

burnt offerings, with calves a year old? Will Jehovah be pleased with thousands of rams, *or* with ten thousand rivers of oil? Shall I give my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul? He has shown thee, O man, what is good. And what does Jehovah require of thee, but to do justly, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with thy God?" (Micah 6:6-8).

The requirement of rituals of animal sacrifices was abolished with the new covenant of the kingdom of heaven established by Christ. And indeed, they are no longer practiced even by Jews who claim to obey the laws of Moses. Those things do not promote righteousness and obedience to God. Jehovah only required them because he was angry with his people. They were a form of punishment to the sons of Israel because of their rebelliousness.

Jehovah spoke to the prophet Ezekiel about that when he said, **"In the day when I chose Israel, and swore to the seed of the house of Jacob, and made myself known to them in the land of Egypt, when I swore to them, saying, I am Jehovah your God, I swore to them in that day, to bring them forth out of the land of Egypt into a land that I had searched out for them, flowing with milk and honey, which is the glory of all lands. And I said to them, Cast ye away every man the abominations of his eyes, and do not defile yourselves with the idols of Egypt. I am Jehovah your God.**

"But they rebelled against me, and would not hearken to me. They did not every man cast away the abominations of their eyes, nor did they forsake the idols of Egypt. Then I said I would pour out my wrath upon them, to accomplish my anger against them in the midst of the land of Egypt. But I worked for my name's sake (that it should not be profaned in the sight of the nations, among which they were, in whose sight I made myself known to them) in bringing them forth out of the land of Egypt. So I caused them to go forth out of the land of Egypt, and brought them into the wilderness" (Ezekiel 20:5-10).

Notice the passage says that from the very beginning they did not forsake the idols in Egypt. Even before they were brought out of that land Jehovah commanded them to cast their idols away, yet they refused. Nevertheless, for his own name's sake he brought them out anyway. Jehovah went on to tell Ezekiel how he gave them his statutes and ordinances, which, he said, **"if a man does, he shall live in them"** (Ezekiel 20:11), but they would not obey. And even though they continually rebelled against him, Jehovah said, **"Nevertheless my eye spared them, and I did not destroyed them, nor did I make a full end of them in the wilderness"** (Ezekiel 20:17). He kept telling them to walk in his statutes and keep his ordinances. Jehovah said, **"But the sons rebelled against me. They did not walk in my statutes, nor kept my ordinances to do them, which if a man does, he shall live in them. They profaned my sabbaths"** (Ezekiel 20:21).

Therefore, he punished them: **"Then I said I would pour out my wrath upon them, to accomplish my anger against them in the wilderness. Nevertheless I withdrew my hand, and worked for my name's sake, that it should not be profaned in the sight of the nations, in whose sight I brought them forth. Moreover I swore to them in the wilderness, that I would scatter them among the nations, and disperse them through the**

countries, because they had not executed my ordinances, but had rejected my statutes, and had profaned my sabbaths, and their eyes were after their fathers' idols.

"Moreover I also gave them statutes that were not good, and ordinances in which they will not live. And I polluted them in their own gifts, in that they caused to pass through *the fire* all that opens the womb, that I might make them desolate, to the end that they might know that I am Jehovah" (Ezekiel 20:22-26).

Notice Jehovah said, **"I gave them statutes that were not good, and ordinances in which they will not live."** It is clear the statutes and ordinances he meant included all those ritual sacrifices. They were not good statutes. They accomplished little good. That is why they are not a part of the good news of Christ, and are now rarely done in any religion. What Jehovah meant by **"in which they will not live"** was that such sacrifices did not promote obedience to righteousness, which is what gives life. Moreover, there were so many detailed rituals required that they became even more disobedient. (You can read about why God causes sin to increase in Part 3:6 under the heading *Law Was Given to Increase Sin*.)

It was as Peter said to the other apostles when he was arguing against requiring the laws of Moses for the Gentile Christians: **"Now therefore why do ye challenge God, to place a yoke upon the neck of the disciples, which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear?"** (Acts 15:10). He called all those laws a yoke upon the neck. He did not mean the simple laws of righteousness such as the ten commandments. He was referring to the whole legal system, including all those animal sacrifices.

The apostle Paul in the New Testament wrote much against the legal system of the law of Moses, especially in the books of Romans and Galatians. In one place he said those laws were **"the regulations that were hostile to us"** (Colossians 2:14). In another place he said, **"Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law"** (Galatians 3:13). Remember, however, he was referring to the entire legal system of the law of Moses, and not to all of its laws. For those such as the ten commandments are good and are timeless.

In the above passage from Ezekiel, Jehovah said, **"And I polluted them in their own gifts, in that they caused to pass through *the fire* all that opens the womb, that I might make them desolate ... ."** That also seems to refer to the yoke of the animal sacrifice rituals. They were required to "pass through the fire," meaning as burnt offerings, all the first born of their animals. (Although a clean one was to be substituted for an unclean one, such as a lamb in place of a donkey.) Those gifts to God polluted them because they did not offer them faithfully. He polluted them by requiring them to perform so many specific offerings that they did not keep them. And in that way he made them desolate; namely because they were disobedient about them. Hence, those statutes and ordinances were not good; they were punishment for them, **"a yoke upon the neck,"** as Peter said.

Below are some other scriptures that show how Jehovah wanted righteousness from his people and not animal sacrifices:

> **Sacrifice and offering thou did not desire, but a body thou have prepared for me. Whole burnt offering and sacrifice for sin thou did not require** (Psalms 40:6).

> **O Jehovah, open thou my lips, and my mouth shall show forth thy praise. For thou delight not in sacrifice, else I would give it. Thou have no pleasure in burnt offering. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit. A broken and contrite heart, O God, thou will not despise** (Psalms 51:15-17).
>
> **To do righteousness and justice is more acceptable to Jehovah than sacrifice** (Proverbs 21:3).
>
> **O Ephraim, what shall I do to thee? O Judah, what shall I do to thee? For your goodness is as a morning cloud, and as the dew that goes away early. Therefore I have hewed them by the prophets. I have slain them by the words of my mouth. And thy judgments are *as* the light that goes forth. For I desire mercy, and not sacrifice, and the knowledge of God more than burnt offerings. But like Adam they have transgressed the covenant. There they have dealt treacherously against me** (Hosea 6:4-7).

Jesus quoted that passage in Hosea to Pharisees who criticized him for eating with sinners, when he said, **"But after going, learn what this means, I desire mercy, and not sacrifice, for I came not to call the righteous, but sinners for repentance"** (Matthew 9:13).

Therefore, dear reader, if all the commands about offerings sound antiquated and tedious, remember that Jehovah gave them not because he delights in such things, but because he wanted a yoke upon the necks of the rebellious sons of Israel. And when Jehovah is displeased with other people he finds ways to place yokes upon their necks as well. Keep that in mind when you read about all these commandments for sacrifices that are given in the law.

Burnt Offerings

Burnt offerings were those when the whole animal was burned. Nothing could be eaten, although sometimes the priest could keep the hide. Burnt offerings could be of the herd or of the flock. They could also be of birds, which were either turtle doves or young pigeons.

Here is the procedure for a (whole) burnt offering of the herd: It was to be a young bull without blemish. (All of the sacrifices burned on the altar had to be without blemish.) The man who offered it was to (1) bring it to the door of the tabernacle, (2) lay his hand upon its head, (3) kill it before Jehovah, (4) skin it and cut it into its pieces, and (5) wash its innards and legs with water. The priests, Aaron's sons, were to (1) present the blood and sprinkle it round about the altar, (2) put fire upon the altar and lay wood upon the fire, (3) lay its pieces, the head and the fat, in order upon the wood, and (4) burn the whole on the altar. The innards and the legs were probably added after they were washed.

An offering of the flock could be of sheep or of goats. And it also was to be a male without blemish. The procedure was similar to the one of the herd. For a bird, the priest was to kill it, tear it by its wings but not apart, then burn it on the altar.

MEAL OFFERINGS

Meal offerings are also called cereal or grain offerings because of what was offered. The offering could be simply of fine flour, or they could be things baked in the oven or cooked in pans. Those baked could be unleavened cakes (unsweetened) mingled with oil or unleavened wafers anointed with oil. Those of pans were cooked in either the baking-pan or the frying-pan. Meal offerings of first-fruits were crushed grain of the fresh ear parched with fire. No meal offering could contain leaven or honey, but they were all to be seasoned with salt. Part of the meal offerings was burnt on the altar, and the rest was given to the priests.

Meal offerings were sometimes offered separately, but meal and drink (wine) offerings were also required as part of other kinds of offerings. For Jehovah commanded, **"When ye come into the land of your habitations, which I give to you, and will make an offering by fire to Jehovah, a burnt offering, or a sacrifice, to accomplish a vow, or as a freewill offering, or in your set feasts, to make a sweet savor to Jehovah, of the herd, or of the flock, then he who offers his oblation shall offer to Jehovah a meal offering of a tenth part *of an ephah* of fine flour mingled with the fourth part of a hin of oil. And wine for the drink offering, the fourth part of a hin, thou shall prepare with the burnt offering, or for the sacrifice, for each lamb ... for each bullock, or for each ram, or for each of the he-lambs, or of the kids. According to the number that ye shall prepare, so shall ye do to every one according to their number"** (Numbers 15:2-12).

PEACE OFFERINGS

Peace offerings were a form of worship for various reasons, and the people could eat of their peace offerings. They were either of the herd or of the flock, but not of birds. The procedure for killing, butchering, and burning was similar to the (whole) burnt offering. However, some details varied according to the kind of animal. For example, their sheep had a fat tail that was not a part of bulls and goats.

Peace offerings could be made for thanksgiving, or for a vow, or be simply a freewill offering. They were always required during their feast days. There were regulations about how long they had to eat the cooked flesh, and restrictions against eating by anybody that had any uncleanness. The priests were given the right thigh and the breast of peace offerings.

SIN OFFERINGS

Sin offerings were for atonement of sins committed unwittingly. Four different circumstances are mentioned: (1) when the anointed priest (the reigning high priest) unwittingly brought guilt on the people, (2) when the whole congregation erred unwittingly, (3) when a ruler sinned unwittingly, and (4) when any soul of the common people sinned unwittingly.

Unwitting sins by the priest and the congregation required a burnt offering of a young bullock. However, only the fat and the innards were to be burned on the altar. The rest of the bullock was to be burned outside the camp in a clean place. No part of those offerings could be eaten. Unwitting sins by a ruler required a male goat, while unwitting sins by a soul of

the common people required a female goat or lamb. The fat and the innards of those offerings were burnt upon the altar. The priests could eat of those sin offerings. However, a priest could not eat of a sin offering made for himself. Nor could a sin offering be eaten when the blood was brought into the sanctuary.

TRESPASS OFFERINGS

Trespass offerings were apparently a type of sin offering for unwitting sin where some kind of recompense was required. However, there seems to have been cases where the sin was done deliberately but perhaps rashly and then forgotten for a time. The distinctions about sins requiring trespass offerings is not always clear. Examples given include being a witness but failing to testify, unknowingly touching something classified as unclean, and swearing rashly but then forgetting about it. However, those should be considered samples and not exclusive.

The requirement for forgiveness was a female lamb or goat. However, if the means of the man making the offering was not sufficient he could bring two turtle-doves or two young pigeons. And if his means was still not sufficient for those he could bring the tenth part of an ephah of fine flour. As with sin offerings the priest could eat of it, but not the man who brought the sacrifice. A trespass offering was also required for sins **"against the holy things of Jehovah"** (Leviticus 5:15). That may refer to anything associated with the sanctuary. In that case the requirement was a ram and payment of restitution to the priest, with twenty-percent added. The same kind of offering and payment was required for sins against neighbors, such as robbery, dealing falsely, and failing to return lost things that were found. Only in this case the recompense was for the priest.

SCHEDULED OFFERINGS

Jehovah also commanded offerings be made on a regular basis. They were to offer two he-lambs for burnt offerings daily, with their meal and drink offerings. They were to offer two additional lambs with their meal and drink offerings on the sabbath day. At the beginning of their months they were to offer for burnt offerings two young bullocks, one ram, seven he-lambs a year old, with their meal and drink offerings, besides the daily offerings. They were also to sacrifice one he-goat for a sin offering. He also said, **"Fire shall be kept burning upon the altar continually; it shall not go out"** (Leviticus 6:13).

There were scheduled offerings required during their annual feast days and holy convocations as well. For the feast of unleavened bread they were to offer for each of seven days **"two young bullocks, and one ram, and seven he-lambs a year old (they shall be to you without blemish), and their meal offering, fine flour mingled with oil. Three tenth parts ye shall offer for a bullock, and two tenth parts for the ram, a tenth part shall thou offer for every lamb of the seven lambs. Also one he-goat for a sin offering, to make atonement for you"** (Numbers 28:19-22).

The same thing was required for the feast of weeks: **"... ye shall offer a burnt offering for a sweet savor to Jehovah: two young bullocks, one ram, seven he-lambs a year old, and**

their meal offering, fine flour mingled with oil, three tenth parts for each bullock, two tenth parts for the one ram, a tenth part for every lamb of the seven lambs, one he-goat, to make atonement for you" (Numbers 28:27-30). Remember, in the New Testament that feast day is called the day of Pentecost.

In the seventh month they were to have what was called the day of blowing of trumpets. The same thing was required for that day, except they were to sacrifice only one bullock instead of two: **"... one young bullock, one ram, seven he-lambs a year old without blemish, and their meal offering, fine flour mingled with oil, three tenth parts for the bullock, two tenth parts for the ram, and one tenth part for every lamb of the seven lambs, and one he-goat for a sin offering, to make atonement for you"** (Numbers 29:2-5).

The tenth day of the seventh month was the day of atonement. And the same sacrifices were required for that day as for the day of blowing of trumpets: **"... one young bullock, one ram, seven he-lambs a year old (they shall be to you without blemish), and their meal offering, fine flour mingled with oil, three tenth parts for the bullock, two tenth parts for the one ram, a tenth part for every lamb of the seven lambs, one he-goat for a sin offering ..."** (Numbers 29:8-11).

The feast of booths began the fifteenth day of the seventh month. It was to last seven days, and they were to sacrifice many beasts. On the first day they were to offer **"thirteen young bullocks, two rams, fourteen he-lambs a year old (they shall be without blemish), and their meal offering, fine flour mingled with oil, three tenth parts for every bullock of the thirteen bullocks, two tenth parts for each ram of the two rams, and a tenth part for every lamb of the fourteen lambs, and one he-goat for a sin offering ..."** (Numbers 29:13-16). On the second through the seventh days they were to offer the same thing, except one less bullock each day. On the eighth day they were to have a solemn assembly, and offer what seems to be the same thing as on the day of blowing of trumpets and the day of atonement: **"one bullock, one ram, seven he-lambs a year old without blemish, their meal offering and their drink offerings for the bullock, for the ram, and for the lambs, shall be according to their number, after the ordinance, and one he-goat for a sin offering ..."** (Numbers 29:36-38).

The Firstborn

After the death of the firstborn of the Egyptians, Jehovah said to Moses, **"Sanctify to me all the firstborn, whatever opens the womb among the sons of Israel. Both of man and of beast, it is mine. ... And it shall be, when Jehovah shall bring thee into the land of the Canaanite, as he swore to thee and to thy fathers, and shall give it to thee, that thou shall set apart to Jehovah all that opens the womb. And every firstling which thou have that comes of a beast, the males shall be Jehovah's. And every firstling of a donkey thou shall redeem with a lamb, and if thou will not redeem it, then thou shall break its neck. And all the firstborn of man among thy sons thou shall redeem"** (Exodus 13:1, 11-13). The command about breaking the neck of an non-redeemed donkey prob-

ably referred to deformed or otherwise unfit ones. And God would not require them to sacrifice a lamb to keep such animals. They were to kill them.

After giving the command about the firstborn, Jehovah gave the reason for it. He said, **"And it shall be, when thy son asks thee in time to come, saying, What is this? that thou shall say to him, By strength of hand Jehovah brought us out from Egypt, from the house of bondage. And it came to pass, when Pharaoh would hardly let us go, that Jehovah slew all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both the firstborn of man, and the firstborn of beast. Therefore I sacrifice to Jehovah all that opens the womb, being males, but all the firstborn of my sons I redeem. And it shall be for a sign upon thy hand, and for frontlets between thine eyes, for by strength of hand Jehovah brought us forth out of Egypt"** (Exodus 13:14-16).

A later command allowed them to redeem their unclean beasts and their sons with a money payment of five shekels. That law says, **"Nevertheless the firstborn of man thou shall surely redeem, and the firstling of unclean beasts thou shall redeem. And those that are to be redeemed of them from a month old shall thou redeem, according to thine estimation, for the money of five shekels, according to the shekel of the sanctuary (the same is twenty gerahs)"** (Numbers 18:15-16).

All the firstborn males of the clean animals were to be brought to the altar as offerings for Jehovah. Moreover, they were to eat of them at that place. Moses said to them, **"All the firstling males that are born of thy herd and of thy flock thou shall sanctify to Jehovah thy God. Thou shall do no work with the firstling of thy herd, nor shear the firstling of thy flock. Thou shall eat it before Jehovah thy God year by year in the place which Jehovah shall choose, thou and thy household"** (Deuteronomy 15:19-20).

THE FIRST-FRUITS

There are several commands about their first-fruits, and what they all mean is not clear. Offering their first-fruits was part of the feast of harvest, as stated in this passage: **"Three times thou shall keep a feast to me in the year. Thou shall keep the feast of unleavened bread (Seven days thou shall eat unleavened bread, as I commanded thee, at the time appointed in the month Abib, for in it thou came out from Egypt, and none shall appear before me empty), and the feast of harvest, the first-fruits of thy labors, which thou sow in the field, and the feast of ingathering at the end of the year, when thou gather in thy labors out of the field"** (Exodus 23:14-16).

However, they were also to offer of their first-fruits before that, as told in this passage: **"Speak to the sons of Israel, and say to them, When ye have come into the land which I give to you, and shall reap the harvest of it, then ye shall bring the sheaf of the first-fruits of your harvest to the priest. And he shall wave the sheaf before Jehovah, to be accepted for you. On the morrow after the sabbath the priest shall wave it. And in the day when ye wave the sheaf, ye shall offer a he-lamb without blemish a year old for a burnt offering to Jehovah. ... And ye shall eat neither bread, nor parched grain, nor fresh ears, until this selfsame day, until ye have brought the oblation of your God.**

It is a statute forever throughout your generations in all your dwellings. And ye shall count to you from the morrow after the sabbath, from the day that ye brought the sheaf of the wave offering, there shall be complete seven sabbaths" (Leviticus 23:10-15). After those seven sabbaths they were to have the feast of harvest, which is why the feast of harvest was also called the feast of weeks, as in this passage: **"Also in the day of the first-fruits, when ye offer a new meal offering to Jehovah in your *feast of* weeks, ye shall have a holy convocation"** (Numbers 28:26).

The sheaf of first-fruits was to be offered immediately after they began their harvest. For they were not allowed to eat anything until that sheaf was brought. It seems to have involved a single sheaf, and was a simple ritual of thanks to God for their harvest. And that was considered so important that they were not allowed to eat until it was done. When Jesus fed the five thousand, and later the four thousand, the first thing he did before giving them food was give thanks to God.

The sons of Israel were commanded to observe the feast of weeks fifty days after the ritual of the sheaf mentioned in the above passage. Here is the command for when those fifty days were to begin: **"Thou shall number to thee seven weeks. From the time thou begin to put the sickle to the standing grain thou shall begin to number seven weeks"** (Deuteronomy 16:9). However, a tradition developed to begin those fifty days after Passover, which meant the ritual of the sheaf was also done then. Hence, they either ignored the command to number the time of the fifty days when they began **"to put the sickle to the standing grain,"** or they scheduled their harvest to always begin immediately after Passover.

There was yet another command about offering first-fruits. It says, **"And it shall be, when thou have come in to the land which Jehovah thy God gives thee for an inheritance, and possess it, and dwell in it, that thou shall take of the first of all the fruit of the ground, which thou shall bring in from thy land that Jehovah thy God gives thee, and thou shall put it in a basket, and shall go to the place which Jehovah thy God shall choose to cause his name to dwell there. And thou shall come to the priest who shall be in those days, and say to him, I profess this day to Jehovah thy God, that I have come to the land which Jehovah swore to our fathers to give us. And the priest shall take the basket out of thy hand, and set it down before the altar of Jehovah thy God.**

"And thou shall answer and say before Jehovah thy God, My father [Israel] **was a Syrian ready to perish, and he went down into Egypt, and sojourned there, few in number. And he became there a nation, great, mighty, and populous. And the Egyptians dealt ill with us, and afflicted us, and laid upon us hard bondage. And we cried to Jehovah, the God of our fathers, and Jehovah heard our voice, and saw our affliction, and our toil, and our oppression. And Jehovah brought us forth out of Egypt with a mighty hand, and with an outstretched arm, and with great terribleness, and with signs, and with wonders. And he has brought us into this place, and has given us this land, a land flowing with milk and honey. And now, behold, I have brought the first of the fruit of the ground, which thou, O Jehovah, have given me. And thou shall rejoice**

in all the good which Jehovah thy God has given to thee, and to thy house, thou, and the Levite, and the sojourner who is in the midst of thee" (Deuteronomy 26:1-11).

That command may have been about a special offering done only once when they first made a harvest in the promised land, or it may have been additional information given about the command for the feast of harvest. One command said to offer a sheaf of first-fruits, which was probably a single sheaf. The other command said to offer a basket of first-fruits, which was probably a basket from every farmer. And that may have been how much of the first-fruits they were required to offer at the feast of harvest. Nothing else is said about how much they were to offer of their first-fruits.

They were to give their first-fruits to the priests, for Jehovah said to Aaron, **"And this is thine: the heave offering of their gift, even all the wave offerings of the sons of Israel. I have given them to thee, and to thy sons and to thy daughters with thee, as a portion forever. Everyone who is clean in thy house shall eat of it. All the best of the oil, and all the best of the vintage, and of the grain, the first-fruits of them which they give to Jehovah, I have given them to thee. The first-ripe fruits of all that is in their land, which they bring to Jehovah, shall be thine. Everyone who is clean in thy house shall eat of it"** (Numbers 18:11-13). That was not part of the tithe given to the Levites.

Special Offerings

There were other circumstances that required offerings. An elaborate ritual involving offerings was also required for the consecration of the high priests. The ceremony was to last seven days, with offerings each day. A bullock and two rams were required the first day. A bullock was required for each of the six days thereafter. A ram may also have been offered each day, but the text is not clear about it. There were also, of course, the scheduled offerings daily and on the sabbath.

An elaborate ritual was also required on the day of atonement when the high priest was allowed inside the most holy place that housed the ark of the covenant. He was only allowed to enter that place one day of the year, and only he was ever allowed in. The ritual included two goats (one of which was the scapegoat) and a bullock. One of the goats and the bullock were for sin offerings, to make atonement for the priest, the (most) holy place, the altar, and the people. The scapegoat was released in the wilderness to symbolize carrying away the sins of the people.

A man who took the Nazirite vow was to submit to an elaborate ritual involving offerings after his time of separation was over. The offerings required were one he-lamb a year old, one ewe-lamb a year old, one ram, and a basket of unleavened bread, cakes of fine flour mingled with oil, unleavened wafers anointed with oil, and their meal offerings and their drink offerings. He was also required to offer two birds and one lamb if he became defiled by a dead body before his time was over.

Offerings were also required when a woman was cleansed after childbirth. As with trespass offerings adjustments were made for what the woman could afford. For example, Mary of-

fered two birds instead of a lamb for her cleansing after the birth of Jesus, which was a provision in the law for mothers who could not afford a lamb.

An elaborate ritual was commanded that required offerings when a man had been cleansed of a leprous disease. His offerings first included two birds. Then on the eight day he was to offer two he-lambs, one ewe-lamb a year old, with a meal offering and a log of oil. Details were given about how all of that was to be used. Jesus called those offerings a gift (see Matthew 8:4). The command also said if he was poor, and could not afford three lambs, then he could take one he-lamb, one tenth part of an ephah of fine flour, a log of oil, and two turtle-doves or two young pigeons. Any kind of abnormal issue from the body also required offering two birds after the person was cleansed.

Eat and Rejoice at the Chosen Place

Jehovah also commanded them to bring their offerings to the one place he would choose, which was initially the altar with the portable tabernacle but eventually the altar at the temple in Jerusalem. He said, **"And the priest shall sprinkle the blood upon the altar of Jehovah at the door of the tent of meeting, and burn the fat for a sweet savor to Jehovah. And they shall no more sacrifice their sacrifices to the he-goats, after which they play the harlot. This shall be a statute forever to them throughout their generations"** (Leviticus 17:6-7). The reason given why they were forbidden to offer their sacrifices anywhere but the chosen place was to discourage them from idolatry, to keep them from making **"their sacrifices to the he-goats, after which they play the harlot."**

In another command about that Moses told them they were to eat of their offerings before Jehovah, and rejoice in all they did, they and their households. He said, **"But to the place which Jehovah your God shall choose out of all your tribes, to put his name there, even to his habitation ye shall seek, and there thou shall come. And there ye shall bring your burnt offerings, and your sacrifices, and your tithes, and the heave offering of your hand, and your vows, and your freewill offerings, and the firstlings of your herd and of your flock. And there ye shall eat before Jehovah your God, and ye shall rejoice in all that ye put your hand to, ye and your households, in which Jehovah thy God has blessed thee"** (Deuteronomy 12:5-7). The time of their sacrifices was not to be for sorrow but for joy. They were to eat and rejoice in all their prosperity. For without prosperity they would have nothing to offer.

Other Laws About Offerings

Here are more details about their sacrifices. One law said, **"Thou shall not offer the blood of my sacrifice with leavened bread, neither shall the fat of my feast remain all night until the morning"** (Exodus 23:18). Another law was about the age of their sacrifices. Jehovah said, **"When a bullock, or a sheep, or a goat, is brought forth, then it shall be seven days under the dam, and from the eighth day and after that it shall be accepted for the oblation of an offering made by fire to Jehovah"** (Leviticus 22:26-27).

They were also forbidden to offer any animal that was blemished or diseased. Moses said, **"Thou shall not sacrifice to Jehovah thy God an ox, or a sheep, in which is a blemish *or* anything bad, for that is an abomination to Jehovah thy God"** (Deuteronomy 17:1). They were also forbidden to leave the meat of any of their sacrifices of thanksgiving overnight. However, other meat of their peace offerings could be eaten the following day.

Foreigners in their midst were allowed to bring offerings for the altar. Jehovah said, **"And if a stranger sojourns with you, or whoever may be among you throughout your generations, and will offer an offering made by fire, of a sweet savor to Jehovah; as ye do, so he shall do. For the assembly, there shall be one statute for you, and for the stranger who sojourns *with you*, a statute forever throughout your generations. As ye are, so shall the sojourner be before Jehovah. One law and one ordinance shall be for you, and for the stranger who sojourns with you"** (Numbers 15:14-16).

The Jews of Jesus' days had so much contempt for Gentiles they would not even allow them in the temple area, much less bring offerings to the altar (see Acts 21:28). Jews today apply the laws about accepting sojourners and strangers to proselytes only. However, the Bible says nothing about applying those commands to proselytes only. Indeed, Jehovah said, **"Love ye therefore the sojourner, for ye were sojourners in the land of Egypt"** (Deuteronomy 10:19). He was obviously not speaking of proselytes because the sons of Israel were not proselytes in Egypt.

The Church and Sacrifices

Jesus, the ultimate sacrifice

Under the law of Moses the people were required to continually offer animal sacrifices for sins. However, the New Testament teaches us that Jesus was the ultimate sacrifice for sins requiring no other. It was through his expiatory sacrifice that we, his disciples, have been redeemed from condemnation with the rest of the world. One of the things Paul said in his letter to the Roman church was, **"For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God, being made righteous freely by his grace, through the redemption in Christ Jesus, whom God set forth an expiatory sacrifice through faith in his blood ..."** (Romans 3:23-25). He also said to the Corinthians, **"For also Christ our Passover was sacrificed for us"** (First Corinthians 5:7). And he said in his letter to the Ephesians, **"Become ye therefore imitators of God, as beloved children. And walk in love, as also the Christ loved us, and delivered himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a fragrant aroma"** (Ephesians 5:1-2).

The author of the Hebrew letter also wrote much about Jesus being the ultimate sacrifice for sins. Speaking about him as our new high priest, he said, **"For such a high priest is fitting for us, devout, innocent, undefiled, separated from sinners, and having become higher than the heavens. Who has no need to offer up sacrifices each day, as those high priests, first for his own sins, then for those of the people, for this he did, once, when he offered up himself"** (Hebrews 7:26-27). Jesus was separated from sinners by being completely sinless. Therefore, God made him higher than the heavens. And by

sacrificing his sinless life in obedience to God he was able to redeem all who belong to him. Consequently, no further sacrifices for sins are needed.

The author of Hebrews compared the sacrificial system of the law of Moses with the one ultimate sacrifice of Jesus. Regarding the animal sacrifices, he said, **"For of every commandment according to law that was spoken by Moses to all the people, after taking the blood of the calves and goats, with water and scarlet wool and hyssop, he sprinkled both the book itself and all the people, saying, This is the blood of the covenant that God made for you. And likewise he sprinkled with the blood both the tabernacle and all the vessels of the service. And almost all things, according to the law, are cleansed with blood, and remission does not occur without bloodshed"** (Hebrews 9:19-22).

In the law of Moses blood was always used to cleanse and consecrate. Of course, such cleansing was figurative, the blood representing the necessity of death. For only death can satisfy the penalty for sin. Sin is exceedingly destructive, as all the sorrow and misery of this sinful world testifies. Man was warned by God from the beginning that sin brings death. And since every man sins, every man dies. The blood of animals sacrificed on the altar was used for remission of sins in the law. However, that remission was only temporary. It simply postponed the final penalty of our death, because the author said, **"it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins"** (Hebrews 10:4).

He then contrasted the animal sacrifices with the sacrifice of Jesus: **"Indeed therefore, a necessity was for the models of the things in the heavens themselves to be cleansed with these, but the heavenly things with better sacrifices than these. For the Christ entered not into a holy place made with hands, representative of the true, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us. And not so that he might offer himself often, as the high priest enters into the Holy things each year with blood by another, since it would be necessary for him to suffer often, from the foundation of the world.**

"But now once, at the end of the ages, he was made known for an annulment of sin by the sacrifice of himself. And inasmuch as it is reserved to men once to die, and after this, judgment, so also the Christ, having been offered once in order to take up the sins of many, will appear a second time, independent of sin, to those waiting for him for salvation" (Hebrews 9:23-28).

Next he said, **"For the law having a shadow of the good things that are coming, not the same substance of the events, with the same sacrifices that are offered continually each year, they are never able to fully perfect those who are approaching. Otherwise would they not have ceased being offered, because of those who worship, once having been cleansed, to have no further conscience of sins? But in them is a reminder of sins each year. For it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins"** (Hebrews 10:1-4).

The law was a shadow showing the necessity of blood sacrifices for remission of sins. It was a mere shadow, because the blood of animal sacrifices cannot take away sins once and for all. For the author said that once performed they would have ceased being offered if they could take away sins, which they cannot. They cannot because men continue to sin by violating the laws of God. However, we who are not under law cannot sin that way. We are under Christ not a legal system. (That is explained more thoroughly in Part 4:2 of this book.) Thus, our offenses against God are viewed differently and are treated differently; they are like growing pains on the way to perfection. As John said, **"Every man who has been begotten of God is not doing sin, because his seed abides in him, and he cannot be sinning, because he has been begotten of God"** (First John 3:9). As sons of God we can offend him, but those offenses are not treated as sin. As Paul said, **"Blessed is a man to whom the Lord does, no, not impute sin"** (Romans 4:8), and that is the case with faithful disciples of Christ.

A little farther in Hebrews the author said, **"By which will we are sanctified through the one time offering of the body of Jesus Christ. And indeed every priest stands daily serving and offering the same sacrifices often, which can never take away sins. But this man, having offered one sacrifice on behalf of sins forever, sat down at the right hand of God, waiting henceforth until his enemies are placed a footstool of his feet. For by one offering he has fully perfected forever those being sanctified"** (Hebrews 10:10-14). It was only by the one time offering of the sinless body of Christ that has taken away the sins of those who belong to him. By that one time offering he **"has fully perfected forever those being sanctified."** Jesus was sinless. Therefore, his sacrifice was not for himself but for those who belong to him, the sanctified. And his pure spiritually unblemished sacrifice had the power to fully perfect us, free from condemnation, meaning our eternal spirits not our bodies. Our bodies remain condemned to die, but our eternal spirits have been redeemed by the blood of Christ.

Our living sacrifice

Jesus sacrificed his life in this world to redeem his disciples from the condemnation caused by their sins. Nevertheless, we too must sacrifice our lives in this world. For Jesus said to his disciples, **"If any man wants to come behind me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. For whoever wants save his life will lose it, and whoever will lose his life for my sake will find it"** (Matthew 16:24-25). Those words were, of course, figurative. What he meant was that we were to accept the sorrows, persecutions, and personal sacrifices that are a necessary part of living righteously in this sinful world.

When Jesus said we must lose our life to save it he meant putting to death our selfishness, and living the way he wants for us instead. It is a living sacrifice, as the apostle Paul said: **"I beseech you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, your reasonable service"** (Romans 12:1). Peter also told how our sacrifices for Christ are spiritual: **"... ye also, as living stones, are built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, accept-**

able to God through Jesus Christ" (First Peter 2:5). Spiritual sacrifices involve putting to death the lusts of our flesh, and giving our lives in service to Christ.

Denying ourselves for him was often emphasized by Jesus. For example, the book of Matthew says, **"And a certain scholar having come, he said to him, Teacher, I will follow thee wherever thou may go. And Jesus says to him, The foxes have holes, and the birds of the sky, nests, but the Son of man has nowhere he may lay his head"** (Matthew 8:19-20). On another occasion two of his twelve apostles asked him if they could sit one on his left and the other on his right in his kingdom; in other words to be elevated above the others. When the ten heard of it they were naturally indignant. Then Jesus summoned them all and said, **"Ye know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord over them, and their eminent men have power over them. But it shall not be so among you. Rather whoever wants to become great among you, he shall be your helper, and whoever wants be first among you shall be your bondman. Just as the Son of man came not to be served, but to serve, and to give his life a ransom for many"** (Matthew 20:25-28).

As I explained earlier God has always preferred spiritual sacrifices from us, the kind of living sacrifice that Paul mentioned. God wants us to forsake our worldliness and give ourselves entirely to him and his cause. The author of Hebrews expressed it well when he was speaking of the sacrifice of Jesus: **"Therefore when he comes into the world, he says, Sacrifice and offering thou did not desire, but thou prepared for me a body. In whole burnt offerings, and for sin thou were not pleased. Then I said, Lo, I come (in the volume of a book it is written about me) to do thy will, O God, saying above, Sacrifice and offering and whole burnt offerings and for sin thou did not desire, nor were thou pleased with things that are offered according to the law. Then he said, Lo, I come to do thy will, O God. He takes away the first, so that he may establish the second"** (Hebrews 10:5-9).

The sacrifices God has always wanted were not the burnt offerings commanded in the law. He wants us to use our bodies, not to indulge our own selfish pleasures, but for righteousness in obedience to his will. When Jesus came into this world to do the will of God he took away the system of animal sacrifices to establish the new system of spiritual sacrifices, using our bodies as living sacrifices to do his will. Always remember what Paul said: **"I beseech you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, your reasonable service"** (Romans 12:1).

Part 2:7

TITHING

All the tithe of the sons of Israel was considered holy to Jehovah. For Moses said, **"And all the tithe of the land, whether of the seed of the land, or of the fruit of the tree, is Jehovah's; it is holy to Jehovah"** (Leviticus 27:30). However, there are some things about the laws of tithing that are not clear. There appears to have been at least two tithes and probably three.

THE ANNUAL TITHE

God commanded the sons of Israel to give their tithe to the Levites. For example, Jehovah said to Moses, **"And to the sons of Levi, behold, I have given all the tithe in Israel for an inheritance, in return for their service which they serve, even the service of the tent of meeting"** (Numbers 18:21), and, **"For the tithe of the sons of Israel, which they offer as a heave offering to Jehovah, I have given to the Levites for an inheritance. Therefore I have said to them, Among the sons of Israel they shall have no inheritance"** (Numbers 18:24).

However, another passage commanded them to bring their tithes, as well as their sacrifices and their firstlings, to the chosen place. And they, and their households, and the local Levites who came with them, were all to eat there and rejoice in what God had blessed them with. The text says, **"But to the place which Jehovah your God shall choose out of all your tribes, to put his name there, even to his habitation ye shall seek, and there thou shall come. And there ye shall bring your burnt offerings, and your sacrifices, and your tithes, and the heave offering of your hand, and your vows, and your freewill offerings, and the firstlings of your herd and of your flock.**

"And there ye shall eat before Jehovah your God, and ye shall rejoice in all that ye put your hand to, ye and your households, in which Jehovah thy God has blessed thee. ... there ye shall bring all that I command you: your burnt offerings, and your sacrifices, your tithes, and the heave offering of your hand, and all your choice vows which ye vow to Jehovah. And ye shall rejoice before Jehovah your God, ye, and your sons, and your daughters, and your men-servants, and your maid-servants, and the Levite who is within your gates—inasmuch as he has no portion nor inheritance with you" (Deuteronomy 12:5-12).

Another command is more direct about eating their tithe (and their firstlings). It says, **"Thou shall surely tithe all the increase of thy seed; that which comes forth from the field year by year. And thou shall eat before Jehovah thy God, in the place which he shall choose to cause his name to dwell there, the tithe of thy grain, of thy new wine, and of thine oil, and the firstlings of thy herd and of thy flock, that thou may learn to fear Jehovah thy God always"** (Deuteronomy 14:22-23). Hence, there must have been two annual tithes. One tithe for the Levites, and another tithe for themselves and the others with them to eat at the chosen place.

They were commanded to go three times each year to the chosen place to feast before Jehovah. Doing that routinely would have created a strong tradition passed on to their children, which would have taught them to fear Jehovah always. However, there was no command specifically about when to take their tithes and their firstlings. There were commands to take the annual tithe to the chosen place, but not when to take it.

There was another provision in the law about the tithe they were to eat. It says they could sell it and bring the money to buy food at the chosen place. That option was allowed when the chosen place was too far from them. After Moses commanded them to bring their tithe to the chosen place and eat it there, he said, **"And if the way is too long for thee, so that thou are not able to carry it, because the place is too far from thee, which Jehovah thy God shall choose to set his name there when Jehovah thy God shall bless thee, then thou shall turn it into money, and bind up the money in thy hand, and shall go to the place which Jehovah thy God shall choose.**

"And thou shall bestow the money for whatever thy soul desires, for oxen, or for sheep, or for wine, or for strong drink, or for whatever thy soul asks of thee. And thou shall eat there before Jehovah thy God, and thou shall rejoice, thou and thy household. And the Levite who is within thy gates, thou shall not forsake him, for he has no portion nor inheritance with thee" (Deuteronomy 14:24-27).

There were no doubt many who could not bring their tithe with them. Consequently, a business developed to sell those visitors the things they needed. And during the time of Christ that business had become corrupted by the merchants who set exorbitant prices for the things the visitors needed. Moreover, those merchants had even set up their business in the temple itself.

Those things were what prompted Jesus to use physical force to drive them out, as described in the book of Matthew: **"And when he entered into Jerusalem, all the city was shaken, saying, Who is this? And the multitudes said, This is Jesus, the prophet from Nazareth of Galilee. And Jesus entered into the temple of God, and cast out all those who sold and bought in the temple. And he overturned the tables of the moneychangers, and the seats of those who sold the doves. And he says to them, It is written, My house will be called a house of prayer, but ye made it a den of robbers"** (Matthew 21:10-13).

The New Testament tells how Jesus drove them out more than once, because apparently they returned whenever he traveled away from Jerusalem (for example see John 2:13-16). The New Testament also tells how the leaders of the Jews supported those merchants in what they were doing. The chief priests and the elders criticized Jesus for interfering with the merchants, demanding to know by what authority he did those things. However, they did not try to stop him for fear of the people.

The Third-Year Tithe

There was a special third-year tithe that was different from the annual tithe. That law says, **"At the end of every three years thou shall bring forth all the tithe of thine increase in**

the same year, and shall lay it up within thy gates. And the Levite, because he has no portion nor inheritance with thee, and the sojourner, and the fatherless, and the widow, who are within thy gates, shall come, and shall eat and be satisfied, that Jehovah thy God may bless thee in all the work of thy hand which thou do" (Deuteronomy 14:28-29). It was not their annual tithe, for the third-year tithe was to remain in their cities.

The annual tithe was to be taken to the place Jehovah would choose to cause his name to dwell there, which was eventually Jerusalem. However, the third-year an additional ten percent of their increase in crops and livestock was to be brought and stored within their gates, meaning in their walled cities. That tithe was to be distributed to the local Levites, sojourners, orphans, and widows. Nothing is said or even suggested that the third-year tithe was in place of the annual tithe. It was apparently in addition to it. If that were the case then every three years there may have been three tithes, which is still much less than what we Americans now pay in taxes.

There was a special ritual required of them when they brought the third-year tithe. They were to speak these words before Jehovah: **"I have put away the hallowed things out of my house, and also have given them to the Levite, and to the sojourner, to the fatherless, and to the widow, according to all thy commandment which thou have commanded me. I have not transgressed any of thy commandments, neither have I forgotten them. I have not eaten of it in my mourning, neither have I put away from it, being unclean, nor given of it for the dead. I have hearkened to the voice of Jehovah my God. I have done according to all that thou have commanded me. Look down from thy holy habitation, from heaven, and bless thy people Israel, and the ground which thou have given us, as thou swore to our fathers, a land flowing with milk and honey"** (Deuteronomy 26:13-15). Those words may have been spoken in unison by all the members of each community, and not by each one separately. However, since the law is silent about that, it could have been done either way, or perhaps by some other way.

How the third-year tithe was to be distributed is not told in the law. Jehovah allowed much freedom and flexibility in many of the things he commanded. Apparently they were to use their own judgment about who received what among the qualified recipients.They probably also stored some of it to be available for the other two years between the years of tithing, perhaps like a bank account to be drawn from when needed. The third-year tithe may have been the only thing similar to the welfare handouts of modern socialist societies. However, nothing is said about how that tithe was administered.

Redeeming a Tithe

There were several laws allowing the sons of Israel to redeem things they were obligated to give to Jehovah. For example, the tithe of the herd and flock was chosen by having the livestock pass one by one "under the rod," and every tenth one was chosen for the tithe. The law forbad changing which ones were selected, whether good or bad. Otherwise whatever a man tried to substitute also became committed to Jehovah. And apparently the same kind of selection process was to be done with their crops; although the law does not say how. Per-

haps it was by bundle or basket. If a man wanted to redeem any part of his tithe the law said he could make a substitution (no doubt of equal value) and add the fifth part of it. The fifth part was the charge for redeeming. They could never substitute anything inferior or blemished.

The Tithe of the Tithe

The law commanded the Levites be given a tithe. However, the Levites were also commanded to give a tithe to the sons of Aaron, the high priests. The law calls it **"a tithe of the tithe"** (Numbers 18:26). After Jehovah said the Levites were to receive all the tithe from the sons of Israel, he said, **"And from it ye shall give Jehovah's heave offering to Aaron the priest. Out of all your gifts ye shall offer every heave offering of Jehovah, of all the best of it, even the hallowed part of it out of it"** (Numbers 18:29). Notice they were commanded to give Aaron the best of their tithe, for he was the chief representative of Jehovah.

The King's Tithe

The king's tithe is not part of the law. I mention it here to show how expensive a king was for them. When the sons of Israel clamored for a king, several centuries after Moses, Jehovah warned what he would cost them. Among the things he said was this: **"And he will take the tenth of your seed, and of your vineyards, and give to his officers, and to his servants. And he will take your men-servants, and your maid-servants, and your finest young men, and your donkeys, and put them to his work. He will take the tenth of your flocks. And ye shall be his servants. And ye shall cry out in that day because of your king whom ye shall have chosen you, and Jehovah will not answer you in that day"** (First Samuel 8:11-18).

The Church and Tithing

There are many people who believe Christians are obligated to contribute a tithe to their churches. However, that is not taught in the New Testament. Tithing is not required for righteousness. Jesus told how carefully the Jewish scholars and Pharisees were to tithe. However, he called them hypocrites because they **"omitted the weightier matters of the law—justice and mercy and faith"** (Matthew 23:23). The author of Hebrews mentions the command to tithe, but that was from the law of Moses: **"Now indeed those of the sons of Levi who receive the priesthood have commandment to collect tithes from the people according to the law ..."** (Hebrews 7:5). He said nothing about disciples of Christ tithing.

Thus, there is no command for Christians to tithe. There are commands to share and to contribute for worthy causes. There are examples of giving, and there are other teachings about it. But Christians are under the law of liberty, and there are no specific requirements for giving.

It has become traditional with virtually all churches to collect a financial contribution on the first day of the week when assembled together. That tradition is based upon the following instructions of Paul to the Corinthians: **"Now concerning the collection for the sanctified,**

as I arranged for the congregations of Galatia, so also do ye. Upon the first day of the week let each of you set something aside near himself, storing up whatever he may prosper, so that when I come no collections may be made then. And when I arrive, whomever ye may approve by letters, I will send these men to bring your gift to Jerusalem" (First Corinthians 16:1-3).

That collection was for the poor Christians in Israel, which is why Paul said it would be sent to Jerusalem. There are at least two things about Paul's command that show it is not something all Christians are commanded to do. First, it was a special gift for the needs of the poor in Israel, and was not for local use. Second, it did not command making a contribution each first day of the week. It commanded each Christian to **"set something aside near himself, storing up whatever he may prosper ... ."** Each man was to store upon the first day of the week what he could afford from his income. Then when Paul came they were to all bring what they had stored for the collection to take to Jerusalem.

That **"no collections may be made then"** meant that Paul did not want to wait for collections. Collections meant many different contributions. He wanted everything ready for that one collection. And by commanding each one to store weekly, that would have helped gradually accumulate a significant sum for the collection. Also there would have been no need for a church treasurer or treasurers to manage the weekly contributions for that gift. Each man would manage his own collection until the time came for the contribution.

Nevertheless, that church activities need to be supported by contributions is clearly taught in the New Testament. For example, Paul said, **"Know ye not that those being employed at the sacred things eat from the temple, and those who serve at the altar are partakers at the altar? And so the Lord commanded those who proclaim the good news to live from the good news"** (First Corinthians 9:13-14). However, the New Testament does not give specific commands about how that is to be done.

Each church is free to decide for itself. For Paul said, **"All things are lawful for me, but not all things are expedient"** (First Corinthians 6:12). God has given Christians liberty and freedom from legal requirements. And things such as how and when contributions are to be made is a matter of expediency, not command. Moreover, we are to give as we "may prosper," and not a specific amount like a tithe.

Part 2:8

THE SABBATHS

THE WEEKLY SABBATH

The fourth of the ten commandments says, **"Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days thou shall labor, and do all thy work, but the seventh day is a sabbath to Jehovah thy God. Thou shall not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy man-servant, nor thy maid-servant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates, for in six days Jehovah made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested the seventh day. Therefore Jehovah blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it."**

That law was to be a blessing for the sons of Israel not a burden. For when Jesus was criticized for doing good on the sabbath, he said, **"The sabbath came into being for sake of man, and not man for sake of the sabbath"** (Mark 2:27). It was to be a day of rest for them every week. Jehovah commanded them all to do no work. He included their family members, their servants, and even their cattle and the strangers among them. It was a great gift especially for the humble and the lowly servant class.

Men can be merciless taskmasters. And God wanted every individual in his nation to enjoy rest for one full day each week. And he even extended his mercy to their livestock. That command helps show the loving kindness of Jehovah toward those who labor and are burdened. It reminds me of what Jesus said: **"Come to me, all ye who labor and have been burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, because I am meek and lowly in heart, and ye will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is befitting, and my burden is light"** (Matthew 11:28-30).

There are seven different places in the books of the law where the sabbath was commanded. The following is the most lengthy of them: **"Truly ye shall keep my sabbaths, for it is a sign between me and you throughout your generations, that ye may know that I am Jehovah who sanctifies you. Ye shall keep the sabbath therefore, for it is holy to you. Everyone who profanes it shall surely be put to death, for whoever does any work on it, that soul shall be cut off from among his people. Six days shall work be done, but on the seventh day is a sabbath of solemn rest, holy to Jehovah. Whoever does any work on the sabbath day, he shall surely be put to death. Therefore the sons of Israel shall keep the sabbath, to observe the sabbath throughout their generations, for a perpetual covenant. It is a sign between me and the sons of Israel forever. For in six days Jehovah made heaven and earth, and on the seventh day he rested, and was refreshed"** (Exodus 31:12-17). One of those places said they could not even kindle a fire on the sabbath.

Of course, through the centuries some were slack about observing the sabbath. Nehemiah tells of the struggle he had to enforce that command. He said, **"In those days I saw in Judah some men treading wine-presses on the sabbath, and bringing in sheaves, and loading donkeys *therewith*, as also wine, grapes, and figs, and all manner of burdens,**

which they brought into Jerusalem on the sabbath day. And I testified *against them* in the day in which they sold foods. There dwelt men of Tyre also in it who brought in fish, and all manner of wares, and sold on the sabbath to the sons of Judah, and in Jerusalem. Then I contended with the ranking men of Judah, and said to them, What evil thing is this that ye do, and profane the sabbath day? Did not your fathers thus, and did not our God bring all this evil upon us, and upon this city? Yet ye bring more wrath upon Israel by profaning the sabbath.

"And it came to pass that, when the gates of Jerusalem began to be dark before the sabbath, I commanded that the doors should be shut, and commanded that they should not be opened till after the sabbath. And I set some of my servants over the gates that there should be no burden brought in on the sabbath day. So the merchants and sellers of all kind of wares lodged outside Jerusalem once or twice. Then I testified against them, and said to them, Why do ye lodge outside the wall? If ye do so again, I will lay hands on you. From that time forth they came no more on the sabbath" (Nehemiah 13:15-21).

However, during Jesus' day many Jews went to the other extreme about the sabbath. The Pharisees were strict legalists. And they added many of their own regulations to the sabbath, to increase the restrictions. For example, they had rules about how far a man could travel on that day. They even criticized a paralyzed man that Jesus had healed on that day for carrying his bed mat. They often condemned Jesus and his disciples for violating their sabbath. But their sabbath was not the sabbath God intended. They changed it from a blessing to a curse, from relief to a burden.

Here is one example: **"And he** [Jesus] **was teaching in one of the synagogues on the sabbath day. And behold, there was a woman who had a spirit of infirmity eighteen years. And she was bent over, and not being able to straighten up completely. And when Jesus saw her, he called out, and said to her, Woman, thou are loosed from thine infirmity. And he laid his hands upon her, and immediately she was made straight, and glorified God. And having responded, the synagogue-ruler, being indignant because Jesus healed on the sabbath, answered and said to the multitude, There are six days in which he ought to work. Therefore coming in these, be healed, and not on the day of the sabbath.**

"But the Lord therefore answered him and said, Ye hypocrites, does not each of you on the sabbath loose his ox or his donkey from the stall, and after leading away, give to drink? And ought not this woman, being a daughter of Abraham whom Satan has bound, lo, eighteen years, be loosed from this bond on the day of the sabbath? And as he said these things all those opposing him were shamed, and all the multitude rejoiced for all the glorious things that were done by him" (Luke 13:10-17).

Wandering one way or another from the narrow way of righteousness seems to be a part of human nature. Many Israelites were either too lax about the sabbath or they were too strict. That tendency to deviate one way or the other from the correct way is something we need always be alert about it. I have seen both extremes among Christians. Most are too lax, but

some are too strict. We need the light of the word of God to keep us on the narrow way of righteousness.

SABBATH OF THE LAND

Jehovah also commanded his people to keep a sabbath for the land. Every seventh year they were to let the land lie fallow. They were allowed to eat of whatever grew, but they could not cultivate the land or harvest any of their crops commercially. He said whatever grew was to feed themselves, their servants, the poor, the strangers, and the beasts of the land. In other words, for everybody.

I was told by a professor of agriculture that such a practice was good for soil conservation. However, I suspect the purpose of the law was for more than just soil conservation. For the labor that would have gone into food production could have been used for other constructive activities, both personal and civil.

God later assured the sons of Israel that he would bless them for their obedience so they would be prosperous enough to have plenty of food in storage for those sabbath years. He said they were to feed from what they stored away the sixth year. They could sow the eighth year and begin reaping again from that crop.

THE JUBILEE

The jubilee was a sabbath of sabbath years. After every seventh sabbath year, the fiftieth year, there was to be the jubilee. Moses said they were to send abroad the loud trumpet on the tenth day of the seventh month, which was the day of atonement. He said they were to hallow that year and proclaim liberty throughout the land.

It was to be another sabbath year for the land. Moreover, houses and property that had been sold were to be returned to their original owners. All land was to be returned, and all houses were to be returned except for those sold in walled cities. However, the houses that had been sold by Levites in walled cities were to be returned at jubilee. Since all land was to be returned at jubilee, that meant all land sales were actually leases. For Jehovah said, **"And the land shall not be sold in perpetuity, for the land is mine. For ye are strangers and sojourners with me"** (Leviticus 25:23). Jehovah commanded them, therefore, to set the price of land according to the number of years after jubilee.

Moreover, liberty was declared that year for servants as well as for the land. All Hebrews who had sold themselves for servants were to be freed. Jehovah said about their servants, **"He shall serve with thee to the year of jubilee. Then he shall go out from thee, he and his sons with him, and shall return to his own family. And he shall return to the possession of his fathers. For they are my servants, whom I brought forth out of the land of Egypt"** (Leviticus 25:40-42).

Such kind of provisions would be a great blessing in any country. Not meaning the same kind of laws but laws that incorporate the principles of the jubilee. One of the great strengths of America has been its large middle class. It is a natural tendency for a few men to accumulate excessive wealth. God did not want men either of great wealth or poverty in

his land. The most productive countries of the world have the smallest number of men of great wealth or of great poverty. The most unproductive countries of the world have a few men of great wealth and a general population in poverty or near poverty.

It is for the health and strength of a nation to have laws preventing the accumulation of great wealth, especially when it is passed on by inheritance. Inheritance is a good thing, but not inheritance of great wealth. It is also a strength of a nation when they have few or any in poverty, especially when most of the population own their own houses, and are not required to continually pay taxes in order to keep them. Imposing taxes on land is an insidious way of confiscating the land. It changes ownership to leasing or sharecropping, because if those on the land do not pay the tax they are evicted.

The Church and the Sabbath

Jehovah used his seventh day rest after the creation as an example of a sabbath. Remember, however, Jehovah never gave a command to keep the sabbath until the time of the Exodus. And there is no evidence anybody kept the sabbath before that time. Nevertheless, there are men who dogmatically assert the law of the sabbath came at the time of the creation and is still in effect.

I take offense from all such men who make dogmatic assertions without evidence, or at most from flimsy evidence they claim implies what they promote. That was the kind of reasoning that caused some Jewish Christians to insist Gentile Christians had to be circumcised. The apostles said those Jews were wrong. And I have no doubt they would also say the same thing to those who insist we must now keep the sabbath as it was given to the sons of Israel.

Nevertheless, I believe one reason Jehovah included the sabbath in the ten commandments was because of the principle of it. Many Christians say the sabbath requirement of the seventh day of rest is now over, and I agree. Many Christians also say that Sunday the first day of the week is now our sabbath, but I disagree, at least as a legal requirement. A Sunday sabbath was formerly the law of the land in many places of America. It was called a blue law, which restricted many things that could be done on Sunday. All of those laws were removed in the nineteen sixties when the majority of Americans decided to make our country a pagan one.

Nevertheless, although I do not support imposing a legal sabbath day as God did for the sons of Israel, my own belief is that the principle of the sabbath should always be obeyed. Even though men are not bound to keep the traditional sabbath day, nevertheless a day of rest each week is important. Perhaps what Jehovah meant by blessing the sabbath and hallowing it, was that after six days of work the laborer should have a day of rest. Therefore, it is a blessing to every working man to be able to rest from required labor one day each week.

Indeed, there may be something in the nature of our bodies that requires such a periodic time of rest. If such is the case, then perhaps that is what Jehovah meant by hallowing the sabbath day. He set it apart as a special blessing for us. That men need such a day of rest is

indicated by the almost universal practice of it now. For I know of no nation that does not provide such a day for its workers, although brutal slave nations such as North Korea may not. In fact, thanks to both the Old and the New Testaments of the Bible, the majority of employed men in American now enjoy two days per week free from required labor.

Yet such a particular day of rest should not be imposed as a rigid legal requirement. For there are times when such rules would not be expedient. Morevoer, such a day of rest should not be limited to the seventh day of the week. And I believe there should be no rules about what should not be done during that day of rest. For rules are inflexible, and as such sometimes they become burdens. In other words, the sabbath rest should now be one in principle and not a legalism. And I rejoice to say, that unlike so many of God's other commands, I believe it is now generally practiced as it should be, for it seems to work very well.

Part 2:9

MARRIAGE AND SEXUAL INTIMACY

TAKING A WIFE

After God created woman for man, he said, **"Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother, and shall cling to his wife, and the two shall be one flesh"** (Genesis 2:24). A wonderful law of Moses was given to the sons of Israel by Jehovah to encourage marriage. The law says, **"When a man takes a new wife, he shall not go out in the army, neither shall he be charged with any business. He shall be free at home one year, and shall cheer his wife whom he has taken"** (Deuteronomy 24:5). That could not mean a vacation of a year. It no doubt means he was free to use his time for personal matters, such as building a house and other things needed for a family. And it was probably also restricted to a man's first wife and not to all others he might take. For Jesus taught that God only tolerated polygyny among his people.

A woman apparently needed the permission of her father before she could marry (unless he was deceased), as indicated by this passage: **"If her father utterly refuses to give her to him ..."** (Exodus 22:16-17). Indeed, until modern times it was traditional in America to ask a man for permission to marry his daughter. In the law of Moses fathers also had the right to sell their daughters for maidservants: **"And if a man sells his daughter to be a maid-servant, she shall not go out as the men-servants do"** (Exodus 21:7). A daughter may have had the right to agree to her sale, because such women usually became wives or concubines of their masters.

In the sight of God, fathers have great authority over their wives and children. However, in most countries of the world their rulers have robbed them of those rights, including in modern America. God would not have given fathers such rights if he thought it was evil, or was going to result in evil. The truth is that taking those rights from fathers has resulted in far more evil to everyone. It has created more trouble for fathers, mothers, sons and daughters, and society in general.

Although Jehovah allowed men to have more than one wife, there were some restrictions about it. The following passage describes one: **"And thou shall not take a wife in addition to her sister, to be a rival *to her*, to uncover her nakedness, besides the other in her life-time"** (Leviticus 18:18). Neither could they marry a woman and her mother both.

With polygyny there are going to be differences in attitudes and feelings by husbands toward each wife. Therefore, Jehovah commanded that the right of the firstborn son was not to depend on who was the favored wife. The actual firstborn son was to receive the double inheritance. And, although there is no specific law about it, no doubt Jehovah wanted each wife to be treated lovingly and justly.

That Jehovah wanted wives of every kind treated justly and kindly can be seen in his law about captive women. The sons of Israel were to be punished if they raped a woman,

whether in wartime or not. However, Jehovah did allow them to take women captive in war and marry them. Here is what he commanded about such women: **"And she shall shave her head, and pare her nails, and she shall put the raiment of her captivity from off her, and shall remain in thy house, and bewail her father and her mother a full month. And after that thou shall go in to her, and be her husband, and she shall be thy wife. And it shall be, if thou have no delight in her, then thou shall let her go where she will, but thou shall not sell her at all for money. Thou shall not deal with her harshly, because thou have humbled her"** (Deuteronomy 21:10-14).

That meant such a woman was to be given a full month to mourn the loss of her old family, and take on her new identity. Only after that could the man marry her if he still wanted her. And after marrying her he could not sell her. He could only set her free. And notice the words **"Thou shall not deal with her harshly."** Jehovah wanted justice and kindness even for captive wives.

DIVORCE

Jehovah hates divorce. For the prophet Malachi said to the sons of Israel, **"Ye cover the altar of Jehovah with tears, with weeping, and with sighing, insomuch that he does not regard the offering any more, nor receives it with good will at your hand. Yet ye say, Why? Because Jehovah has been witness between thee and the wife of thy youth, against whom thou have dealt treacherously, though she is thy companion, and the wife of thy covenant. And did he not make one, although he had the residue of the Spirit? And why one? He sought a godly seed. Therefore take heed to your spirit, and let none deal treacherously against the wife of his youth. For I hate putting away, says Jehovah, the God of Israel ..."** (Malachi 2:13-16).

Jehovah said he hates putting away, meaning divorce. Nevertheless, he allow it for his people. The law of Moses said a man could send a wife away **"if she finds no favor in his eyes, because he has found some unseemly thing in her"** (Deuteronomy 24:1). All that was required was for him to give her a bill of divorcement. However, it had to be **"because he has found some unseemly thing in her."** Other translations say "uncleanness" or "indecency" instead of "unseemly thing."

God did not allow divorce for any cause. He only allowed a man to divorce his wife if he found some uncleanness, indecency, or unseemly thing in her. Yet the Jews conveniently ignored that part of the command, as this passage indicates: **"And Pharisees came to him** [Jesus]**, trying him, and saying to him, Is it permitted for a man to divorce his wife for every cause? And having answered, he said to them, Have ye not read that he who made them from the beginning made them male and female, and said, For this reason a man will leave his father and mother behind, and will be bonded with his wife, and the two will be in one flesh? So that they are no longer two, but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, no man shall separate. They say to him, Why then did Moses command to give a writing of divorcement, and to divorce her? He says to them, For your hard heart Moses allowed you to divorce your wives, but from the be-**

ginning it did not happen this way" (Matthew 19:3-8). All that those Jews wanted was the right to give the woman a writing of divorcement "for every cause." They ignored the part in the law about having proper justification.

In the law a divorced woman could remarry, and a man could remarry a woman he had divorced. However, he could only remarry her if she had never married another man, even if her second husband had died or divorced her. The law said her second marriage defiled her toward him, and remarrying her would create evil. Moses said about it, **"For that is abomination before Jehovah, and thou shall not cause the land to sin, which Jehovah thy God gives thee for an inheritance"** (Deuteronomy 24:4).

The law allowed a man to divorce his wife, but does not say a woman could divorce her husband. Even today in Israel orthodox Jews do not allow a woman to divorce her husband without his consent. In the New Testament, when Paul was speaking of marriage and the law, he said, **"A wife is bound by law as long a time as her husband lives, but also if the husband should sleep, she is free to be married to whom she desires, only in the Lord"** (First Corinthians 7:39). He also said, however, that a Christian woman could separate from her husband. Although she could not remarry as long as he was living, unless he was an unbeliever who left her. Paul also said a husband was not to leave his wife. For Jesus said that fornication was the only justified cause for divorce.

Regarding children, the Bible makes it clear that until they matured and left the household their father had chief authority over them. However, the law is silent about who retained possession of the immature children when a woman was divorced. The example of Abraham's son Ishmael suggests the children of a divorced woman normally remained with their mother. Ishmael's mother was Hagar, the handmaid of Sarah whom she gave to Abraham to bear a son for him. Several years afterward Sarah finally bore a son, Isaac. When Ishmael began to persecute the young child, Abraham sent Hagar away at God's command, and Ishmael went with her.

Remember however, a woman could never divorce her husband, so she could not take their children unless he divorced her. If a woman was able to keep the children that would have helped protect her against frivolous divorces. However, since the law is silent about the matter, perhaps possession of the children in a divorce was to be decided by the judges.

The Tokens of Virginity

One of the laws of Moses concerns evidence of the virginity of a woman before marriage. If a man married a woman who claimed to be virgin, and then he doubted her virginity, he could make a public accusation. That law is about the woman's "tokens of virginity." However, what that means is not clear, and so has been debated. The most popular idea says it was a cloth under the woman that was stained with blood from the rupture of her hymen during first coitus. I disagree. I believe it was the hymen itself that was removed by her mother or some other woman before the wedding. The theory it was a blood stained cloth from coitus has spawned some evil practices that are done even today, such as violating the virginity of a bride-to-be by some other man to produce such a cloth for her parents.

In Bible times virginity was considered very important for a woman. In any virtuous society men want to marry virgin women. Virginity is a quality of sexual purity, and sexual purity is vital for the stability of marriage. Marriages disintegrate where sexual looseness is practiced. And a woman who failed to keep her virginity before marriage was considered a poor candidate for a stable marriage. The law says a husband could accuse his wife publicly of not being a virgin when he married her. To meet that accusation her father was to bring the tokens of her virginity to the elders for proof of her virginity before the wedding. With that evidence the elders were to chastise the man, and fine him a hundred shekels (a large sum) to give to her father. And he could never divorce her; although she was probably free to leave him if she chose. If her husband had a conscience he would have begged her forgiveness, and would have shown more love to her.

On the other hand, if her tokens of virginity were not found, Jehovah said the men of the city were to stone her to death, **"because she has wrought folly in Israel, to play the harlot in her father's house. So shall thou put away the evil from the midst of thee"** (Deuteronomy 22:20-21). That indicates the seriousness of her sin, the major part of which was lying to her husband about her prior virginity. Thus is the value of virginity before marriage. It is something every woman should carefully preserve.

The Law of Jealousy

Another law provided a way for a husband to test his wife's faithfulness. Adultery is devastating to marriage, but it is often difficult to prove. Therefore, if a man was suspicious of his wife, and became jealous toward her, he could bring her to the priest for testing. It was called the law of jealousy. The procedure is summarized below:

1. The man was to bring his wife to the priest with an oblation for her, of the tenth part of an ephah of plain barley meal.
2. The priest was to bring her near, and set her before Jehovah (at the sanctuary).
3. The priest was to take holy water in an earthen vessel, and put dust from the floor of the tabernacle in it.
4. The priest was to let the hair of the woman's head go loose.
5. The priest was to put the meal offering in her hands, and he was to have in his hand the water of bitterness that causes the curse.
6. Then the priest was to cause her to swear to a curse if she were guilty. After he described the curse the woman was to say, Truly, Truly.
7. The priest was to write the curses in a book, and blot them out into the water of bitterness.
8. The priest was to take the meal offering of jealousy out of the woman's hand, wave the meal offering before Jehovah, bring it to the altar, and burn a handful of it on the altar.
9. Finally, the priest was to make the woman drink the water.

The text then says, **"And when he has made her drink the water, then it shall come to pass, if she is defiled, and has committed a trespass against her husband, that the wa-**

ter that causes the curse shall enter into her bitter, and her body shall swell, and her thigh shall fall away. And the woman shall be a curse among her people" (Numbers 5:27). How her body would swell and her thigh would fall away is not explained. However, it would certainly not be the result of some kind of miraculous intervention.

That whole process was almost certainly a form of lie detection. The procedure described here in the law of Moses was unlike modern lie detection procedures, which rely on detecting subtle physiological changes that are amplified electronically. The method used by the priest relied upon the more extreme and noticeable changes of emotional arousal, such as what happens in a panic reaction or a panic attack. Panic reactions consist primarily of heavy breathing (usually fast and shallow), rapid heart rate, and profuse sweating. Such reactions are quite noticeable and often result in dizziness or fainting spells. However, there are many other ways the body can respond to emotional stress.

The procedure conducted when a husband suspected his wife of adultery was no doubt quite effective for producing a panic reaction in a guilty woman living in those times. It was conducted by the priest in the court of the holy sanctuary with her husband and probably others observing. She was the center of attention, and was required to swear before God to the terrible curse. And she was required to drink the water of bitterness containing dust from the tabernacle floor and the ink of the written curse. Even an innocent woman would have been extremely nervous if not trembling during the process.

What is meant specifically by **"her body shall swell, and her thigh shall fall away"** is not clear. This is the only place in the Bible that uses those expressions. Perhaps her body swelling referred to the heightened (swollen) emotional responses of a panic attack. And perhaps the part about her thigh falling away meant dizziness or fainting. Those responses are by the autonomic nervous system over which we have little volitional control. Hence, her guilt induced fear would have exposed her, perhaps even before she drank the water of bitterness. That water may have been the final trigger to release the guilty woman's fear reaction if it had not already occurred. It is also common for a guilty woman in those kinds of circumstances and in such an emotional condition to break down and confess. Of course, a hardened and conscienceless woman would not have been as vulnerable to that test. Nevertheless, if morality had been high, and this law was known and practiced then the development of such sinful women would have been rare. Moreover, such women are quickly exposed by their loose behavior, and such a lie detection procedure would not be necessary.

Most of the laws of Moses were designed for those ancient times and circumstances, and were never intended to be useful for all times. And I am persuaded this law for a jealous husband was one of them. Nevertheless, there are timeless principles of justice and righteousness in all of the laws, which can be applied to men of all ages. For when Paul was speaking to the Jews he said they had **"in the law the essence of knowledge and truth"** (Romans 2:20).

Why she would not be put to death as an adulteress, if she failed the test, is not told. Perhaps because there was no other evidence against her she was spared death. Nevertheless, if she

failed that test she would still **"be a curse among her people,"** which would no doubt have been a severe punishment.

If the accused woman was innocent she was free from the curse and could conceive seed (children). The man was also free from iniquity. There is no sin in being suspicious and doing something properly about it. Sin is when suspicion leads to unjust behavior. Openness about suspicion is the right way to act. And the law of jealousy was a procedure relevant for that age to determine the truth so that appropriate action could be taken either way.

The Duty of a Brother

There was an ancient tradition about brothers that became part of the law of Moses. The Bible first tells about the tradition in the book of Genesis. One of Judah's sons died childless, and he said to his other son Onan, **"Go in to thy brother's wife, and perform the duty of a husband's brother to her, and raise up seed to thy brother"** (Genesis 38:8). The law of Moses commanded that be done whenever a man died childless. The purpose was to preserve the dead man's name through the first son of his widow by his surviving brother. Sometimes a man would refuse to cooperate. Onan went into his brother's wife, but he spilled his seed on the ground so she would not conceive. And God punished him for it by taking his life.

The law said if a man refused to take the woman, she was to bring her accusation to the elders. The text says, **"Then the elders of his city shall call him, and speak to him. And if he stands, and says, I do not want to take her, then his brother's wife shall come to him in the presence of the elders, and loose his shoe from off his foot, and spit in his face. And she shall answer and say, So shall it be done to the man who does not build up his brother's house. And his name shall be called in Israel, The house of him who has his shoe loosed"** (Deuteronomy 25:8-10). I know of no country in the world that now has such a law or tradition to preserve the name of a brother.

Sins of Sexual Intimacy

Sexual intimacy with near of kin

Incest was forbidden by the law of Moses, just as it is now in most countries of the world. The text says, **"None of you shall approach to any who are near of kin to him, to uncover nakedness. I am Jehovah"** (Leviticus 18:6). The near of kin included both biological and legal near of kin. The expression "uncover nakedness" referred to sexual intimacy. The relatives mentioned, whose nakedness was not to be uncovered, included these: mother, step-mother, sister, step-sister, sister-in-law, daughter, daughter-in-law, granddaughter, aunt. The law against a man uncovering the nakedness of his daughter is mentioned indirectly: **"Thou shall not uncover the nakedness of a woman and her daughter ..."** (Leviticus 18:17).

Whether or not it was wrong to literally uncover their nakedness probably depended upon the circumstances. A man was no doubt allowed to see the nakedness of his baby daughter, but it would not have been right to see her nakedness when she became older, espe-

cially after adolescence. Of course, extraordinary circumstances may have allowed men to see the nakedness of any of those persons.

The specific penalty mentioned for violating some of those restrictions was death. For example one text says, **"And the man who lies with his father's wife has uncovered his father's nakedness. Both of them shall surely be put to death, their blood shall be upon them. And if a man lies with his daughter-in-law, both of them shall surely be put to death. They have wrought perversion. Their blood shall be upon them"** (Leviticus 20:11-12). Specific penalties were not mentioned for all of the cases that were forbidden. In some cases the penalty was being cut off in the sight of the sons of their people. In other cases the text says they would die childless. Nevertheless, those passages suggest the penalty for all of those violations was death. Being cut off and dying childless seems to indicate immediate death.

Adultery

The seventh of the ten commandments says, **"Thou shall not commit adultery."** In one sense adultery is like murder; it kills the "one flesh" of marriage. For the prophet Ezekiel said adulteresses were women who shed blood: **"And righteous men, they shall judge them with the judgment of adulteresses, and with the judgment of women who shed blood, because they are adulteresses, and blood is on their hands"** (Ezekiel 23:45). There is no sin against marriage that is more severe than adultery. It is a betrayal of the wedding vows. In fact, marriage betrayal and unfaithfulness have become euphemisms for adultery. Moreover, adultery often results in the conception of bastards.

The main solution to bastards in modern America is just to murder them before they are born. Adultery was a capital offense in the law of Moses, but this evil generation of Americans no longer even considers it a crime (although a law against it may still exist in some states). Adultery is almost always excused by this evil generation, because it is so commonly practiced. It is a symptom of serious moral decadence, and we are becoming a nation of bastards. Our negro subculture is already populated by a majority of bastards.

There are many words of warning in the Bible against adultery. For example, Solomon said, **"He who commits adultery with a woman is void of understanding. He who would destroy his own soul does it"** (Proverbs 6:32). And it was the only cause Jesus said that justified divorce: **"And I say to you, that whoever may divorce his wife, not for fornication, and will marry another, commits adultery. And he who married her who has been divorced commits adultery"** (Matthew 19:9). Fornication is the more general term that covers sexual sins involving a man and a woman, including adultery. Hence, a woman guilty of fornication before marriage, or adultery afterward, could be divorced if her Christian husband learned of it.

God sometimes accused his nation of committing adultery against him. After the destruction of the ten tribes of Israel Jehovah said to his prophet Jeremiah, **"And I saw, when, for this very cause that backsliding Israel had committed adultery, I had put her away and given her a bill of divorcement, yet treacherous Judah her sister feared**

not, but she also went and played the harlot" (Jeremiah 3:8). Jehovah pleaded for the tribe of Judah to return to him, but when they refused he destroyed them also.

Fornication

A man who seduced a virgin not betrothed was required to pay a dowry and marry her. However, if her father refused to give her to him, he was still required to pay the dowry. Fornication, therefore, caused a less than honorable marriage for the man and woman. If the marriage was not allowed by her father, then the result was the loss of virginity by the unmarried woman, and the payment of an expensive dowry by the man. Of course, if they were concealed the only physical loss would be the virginity of the woman, and the risk to her of bearing a bastard.

A man who committed fornication with a betrothed bondmaid was to be punished, both he and the bondmaid. They were not to be put to death, but nothing more is said about what their punishment was to be. Perhaps it was left to the discretion of the judges. The text says the reason they were not to be put to death was because she was not free. What that means is not clear. Perhaps being a bondmaid made her more vulnerable and subject to temptation, and that spared them death. Whatever punishment they received, the man was to bring a ram to the priest for a trespass offering to make atonement for him.

Fornication is rampant during these evil times in America. It is a seductive but vicious temptation everywhere in the country, especially for the young. However, Paul wrote a serious warning about it. He said, **"Flee fornication. Every sin, whatever a man may do, is outside the body, but he who fornicates sins against his own body"** (First Corinthians 6:18). Remember that every time you are tempted. Flee from it.

Harlotry

One passage of the law that forbids harlotry is the following: **"Do not profane thy daughter, to make her a harlot, lest the land fall to whoredom, and the land become full of wickedness"** (Leviticus 19:29). Harlotry is a tempting way for a woman to get money. I once watched a TV program where a policeman asked a young woman why she was a prostitute. The whore replied, "It's quick and easy." The above law mentions one reason Jehovah outlawed harlotry. It says the land would become full of wickedness. And anybody with eyes can see that neighborhoods with much prostitution are filthy places with much lawlessness. And if they were good places before, they quickly degenerate when prostitution enters.

Scoffers who emphasize legalism claim the passage limits harlotry to the daughters of Israelites and not to any others. In other words, they claim prostitution was not outlawed in general. Nobody who understands the teachings of the Bible would agree. Rahab had been a harlot in Jericho before they destroyed it, but there is no evidence she remained one in Israel. There were no doubt harlots in Israel, but there were many things they did from time to time against the will of God.

Another law says, **Thou shall not bring the hire of a harlot, or the wages of a dog, into the house of Jehovah thy God for any vow, for even both these are an abomination**

to Jehovah thy God" (Deuteronomy 23:18). In the Bible a harlot was always a woman. The dog in that passage refers to male prostitutes. During Bible times calling a man a dog was an extreme insult. Jehovah considered the wages of any kind of prostitution to be unclean. A whore who contributes money to a church is actually insulting God with filthy money. One well-know modern preacher said he would accept money from the devil if he could use it for the Lord's work. He was obviously unfamiliar with the above passage.

Rape

If a man raped a virgin not betrothed and it was found out, he was to pay her father fifty shekels of silver and marry her. And he could never divorce her. Although she may have been able to leave him.

If a man raped a betrothed virgin in the city, and she did not cry out then they were both to be stoned to death. Obviously in the cities of those days a woman's cry would have been heard. When Moses gave that command, he said, **"So thou shall put away the evil from the midst of thee"** (Deuteronomy 22:24). If a man raped a betrothed virgin outside the city, however, only the man was to die, because there would be nobody around to hear her.

It is common nowadays to hear of cases where a woman accuses a man of raping her, but he claims she consented. Such an accusation would not be admissible in the law of Moses unless the act was committed where nobody could have heard her cries. That law would not only encourage an assaulted woman to cry out for help, but it would help prevent false accusations by women. False accusations by women in modern America have caused innocent men to be imprisoned for many years. Recent DNA evidence has exonerated many such men. However, I have never heard of the false accuser being punished. Crime often pays in this pagan generation of Americans.

During menstruation

Jehovah commanded, **"And if a man shall lie with a woman having her sickness, and shall uncover her nakedness, he has made naked her fountain, and she has uncovered the fountain of her blood. And both of them shall be cut off from among their people"** (Leviticus 20:18). I know of no similar law in the nations of the world, including America. Yet being sexually intimate with a woman during her period of menstruation was so offensive to God, that he commanded they be cut off from among their people, which almost certainly meant being slain.

However, the offense mentioned in that passage must be about those who deliberately lie together during the woman's menstrual period. For there is another law that says, **"And if any man lies with her, and her impurity be upon him, he shall be unclean seven days, and every bed on which he lies shall be unclean"** (Leviticus 15:24). That must refer to times such as the very beginning of her period when they were not yet aware.

Perverse sexual behavior

One of the most horrible perversions of sexual behavior is bestiality. There are three places in the law that say it is forbidden. The penalty for a guilty man or woman was death, and the beast was also to die. Another perversion of sex that was forbidden was homosexuality, and it too was a capital crime. Yet those perversions (and many others) are widely practiced by this pagan generation of Americans, and they go unpunished. They are now considered rights by law. Our very degenerate entertainment business has romanticized and glorified fornication and harlotry for a long time, and now they are beginning to do that with homosexuality.

They defile the land

Jehovah warned his people to shun all those sexual sins. He said they were abominations that defile a land. He said it was for doing just such things that he wanted the peoples of their promised land exterminated. Here is the warning he gave: **"Do not defile ye yourselves in any of these things** [the various sins of sexual behavior]**. For in all these the nations are defiled which I cast out from before you, and the land is defiled. Therefore I visit the iniquity of it upon it, and the land vomits out its inhabitants. Ye therefore shall keep my statutes and my ordinances, and shall not do any of these abominations, neither the home-born, nor the stranger that sojourns among you, (all these abominations the men of the land have done, who were before you, and the land is defiled), that the land not vomit you out also, when ye defile it, as it vomited out the nation that was before you. For whoever shall do any of these abominations, even the souls that do them shall be cut off from among their people. Therefore ye shall keep my charge, that ye not practice any of these abominable customs, which were practiced before you, and that ye not defile yourselves in it. I am Jehovah your God"** (Leviticus 18:24-30).

God has many ways to cause a land to vomit out its inhabitants. He can use the forces of nature and the forces of man. Remember these thing when you see a people being replaced in a land. A modern example, perhaps, is how European countries are becoming populated with a greater percentage of Muslims. Islam is a very evil religion, but Muslims are not as guilty of practicing such sexual sins as modern Europeans who have forsaken Christ for paganism.

In a similar way the people of my country are being populated with a greater percentage of Hispanics and other foreigners, and nobody can stop it in spite of many efforts to try. It will not be stopped until the people repent, stop committing all those sins of sexual behavior, and stop murdering their babies. God is causing the land to vomit such sinners out.

Part 2:10

FATHERS AND MOTHERS

The fifth of the ten commandments says, **"Honor thy father and thy mother, that thy days may be long in the land which Jehovah thy God gives thee."** Every devoted father and mother knows of the enormous cost in time and labor necessary to rear children properly, not even counting the large financal costs. Children enter our lives as uncivilized souls full of energy that must be tamed and cultivated. And children rarely ever come near compensating their parents for those many years they sacrificed to rear them. Indeed, it is almost impossible except for the very rich. The least we must all do is honor them and help them, not only during our childhood years, but always.

Jesus spoke of our continuing duty when he was criticized by the Jews for not keeping one of their traditions. He said, **"Well do ye reject the commandment of God, so that ye may keep your tradition. For Moses said, Honor thy father and thy mother, and, He who speaks evil of father or mother, let him perish in death. But ye say, If a man should say to his father or mother, Whatever ye might be benefited from me is Corban, that is, an offering, then ye no longer allow him to do anything for his father or his mother, annulling the word of God by your tradition that ye have delivered. And many such like things ye do"** (Mark 7:9-13).

Only the religion of the Bible honors God as our Father. That Almighty God, creator of the universe, is our Father is an exceedingly wonderful thing. And it is very significant how he created us. Certainly God can do anything, and he could have created us in a very different way. Yet he created us to be fathers and mothers to bring new souls into the world. And there is no other creature under heaven that must devote more time and labor, and endure more hardship, to rear them properly. Although the Bible does not say directly, I suspect God made us that way so that we could share his experience as a Father. It gives us a way to better know how much time and labor he must devote, and how much hardship he must endure, to raise up new souls in the world. We are a father to a few, but he is a Father to billions. And just as we suffer in the process, so also he experiences grief.

The psalmist mentions God's grief over the sons of Israel whom he rescued from Egyptian slavery. The psalmist said, **"O come, let us worship and bow down. Let us kneel before Jehovah our maker. For he is our God, and we are the people of his pasture, and the sheep of his hand. Today, O that ye would hear his voice! Harden not your heart, as in the provocation, as the day of trial in the wilderness, where your fathers challenged me, proved me, and saw my work. Forty years long I was grieved with *that* generation, and said, It is a people that do err in their heart, and they have not known my ways. Therefore I swore in my wrath that they should not enter into my rest"** (Psalm 95:6-11). God grieves over the unfaithfulness and disobedience of his children, and he does not enjoy punishing his any more than we do ours.

Let no man think God does not continue to suffer and grieve because of the continuing rebellion and wickedness of men, whom God created in his image, and who are his offspring. And our suffering is but a drop in the ocean compared with God's. Our ability to have children, accompanied with all the suffering involved in rearing them correctly, is one way we share the suffering of God who is the Father of us all. And for those of us who trust him and obey his will, God will adopt us to be his eternal sons in heaven. And we will share the glories with him there when this life of pain and sorrow is over.

God desires that the man be head of his family, and be primarily responsible for the welfare of his wife and children. He is also to be involved in training his children. For Paul said, **"And ye fathers, do not exasperate your children, but rear them in the training and admonition of the Lord"** (Ephesians 6:4). The primary role of womankind is to serve men and bring new souls into the world. Speaking about them, Paul told Timothy, **"But she will be saved through childbearing, if they continue in faith and love and sanctification with sobriety"** (First Timothy 2:15). Paul was speaking of the general role of women, and not that every woman must bear children. For in another place he encouraged some women to remain unmarried (see First Corinthians 7:34). A mother's primary role is to serve her husband and care for her children. She must be actively involved in rearing them, but their father has the primary responsibility that it is done properly. And as they mature he should be actively involved in developing wisdom within them.

Paul said the commandment to honor our fathers and mothers was the first one with promise (see Ephesians 6:2), namely, **"... that thy days may be long in the land which Jehovah thy God gives thee."** Honoring and obeying parents helps a man live right and avoid the dangers of reckless living. Solomon said, **"For I was a son to my father, tender and only beloved in the sight of my mother. And he taught me, and said to me, Let thy heart retain my words. Keep my commandments, and live"** (Proverbs 4:3-4). It is by respecting a righteous father's good advice that children acquire wisdom, and wisdom preserves life. Hence, honoring parents helps preserve our lives. It is not coincidental that the average life span of juvenile delinquents and those from fatherless households is much shorter than that of obedient children with loving fathers.

Jehovah also commanded a child not to smite or curse his father or his mother. And the penalty for either one was death. Anybody else could smite them with much less punishment, perhaps only simple retribution. And only cursing Jehovah was a capital crime in the law for everybody. Why, therefore, was Jehovah so severe toward a child who would smite or curse his parent?

The Bible gives no reason, and so I can only suggest an explanation. Parents are the first authorities children experience. And to strike or curse someone is a serious form of violence against that person. Tolerating such acts of rebellion against authority is a threat to the stability of any society. Disrespect and violence against parents undermines the very foundation of all law and order. No society can survive long that tolerates it, and the growing fragmentation of American society is just one more example.

Jehovah even commanded children to fear their parents: **"Every man shall fear his mother and his father"** (Leviticus 19:3). But how can children fear their parents when there is nothing for them to fear? Such things as the modern folly of outlawing corporal punishment is contributing to our social decadence. The disciples of the devil scoff at such warnings, but that is how the devil operates. He lies about sin until it is too late to escape the harm it creates.

I say with great sorrow that the command to honor fathers and mothers has been widely violated by my countrymen since America became pagan. The entertainment business has been one of the worse offenders and propagandists against this command. They typically portray parents in a very demeaning way. It is no exaggeration to say they portray children as the wisest and best of the family members. Mothers are next, and fathers are almost always portrayed as the worst. Fathers, especially Christian ones, are made out to be either evil men or fools. Those producers do all of that in the name of entertainment. Their standard is not that children should honor their fathers and mothers, but that fathers and mothers should honor their children. The values of the entertainment business are satanic to the core. It is no secret that they and their supporters hate the kind of family God loves. If I had the power, that business is one of the first I would purge of its filth. For it is a source of great toxic waste that is poisoning lives and destroying souls.

One of the tragic consequences of their influence is the widespread disintegration of marriage. That disintegration is greatest in our Negro subculture, but it is growing in all parts of the country. The Negro culture in America is now matriarchal, and most of their children are born bastards. In fact, it is probable that most of them do not even know who fathered them. The majority of American Negro males have forsaken marriage and fatherhood, and like dogs their only involvement is to breed bastards. That did not happen until our country became pagan, and our corrupt rulers created laws to discourage marriage. The concept of parenthood has become so corrupted that homosexuals can adopt children in many states, and there is even now a powerful movement to allow homosexual marriage.

Another part of the war against the family as God would have it is the current hostility toward any kind of parental discipline. Indeed, the practice of corporal punishment can now result in criminal charges and even having children taken away. Opponents of corporal punishment claim they are protecting children, but virtually all of them support the murder of the unborn. There is enormous hypocrisy about it. If a father happens to scratch or bruise his child while punishing him, that is a crime. But if a doctor murders the child before he enters into the world, that is acceptable to them. And not a word is said about sporting events or playground activities that may result in cuts and bruises, which are sometime severe. Yet even minor cuts and bruises caused by punishment bring outcries of child abuse. Those hypocrites are not against things that causes minor injuries, they are against punishment.

The law of Moses says nothing about parental child abuse beyond the ancient practice of murdering them. That was done as a form of worship to idols, and was soundly condemned by God. In modern times mothers are permitted to murder their children before they are born, but parents are not allowed to impose strict punishment afterward. It is an evil both

ways. The rulers of our government have robbed husbands of their God given right as head of their wives. And they have robbed both fathers and mothers of their God given right to punish their children as they see fit.

Certainly parents need to be careful about how they punish. For Paul warn against being too severe when he said, **"Fathers, do not provoke your children, so that they may not be discouraged"** (Colossians 3:21). God will punish parents who show no mercy, for James said, **"For the judgment is merciless to him who did no mercy"** (James 2:13).

The widely publicized horror stories about punishment, especially corporal punishment, creating child abuse are too often propaganda. During most of the history of America fathers and mothers had the right to discipline their children any way they chose. And there was no problem of child abuse during those days when corporal punishment was commonly used. Moreover, law and order, peace and security, civil stability, and even personal freedoms were much greater then than now. Communities were more peaceful, homes were happier, marriages were more enduring, and our mental health was much sounder.

Yes, there have been authentic cases of child abuse, as well as the abuse of wives, animals, and just about everything. And all such cases should be judged as circumstances indicate. And this is one passage that should be applied: **"For the judgment is merciless to him who did no mercy."** This world contains many brutal men, and women also. And they can be found in many places and roles, including rulers and authorities beyond those of parents. Just because a few rulers misuse their power to punish, does not mean all rulers should have that power taken from them. The recently publicized reports of the abuse of prisoners of war is an example of that. Abuse is not caused by the form of punishment, it is caused by the evil heart of those who do it.

It is foolish to outlaw something just because a few misuse it. That approach to combatting evil began with the Prohibition movement against alcoholic beverages. It is based upon the idea that environmental circumstances determine behavior, and not our free will. And it is commonly accepted and widely used now to excuse guilt. Criminals are given so-called "treatment" for "rehabilitation," as if crime were a disease. Our prisons are no longer called penitentiaries (places to repent), but correctional facilities. The result has contributed to the great growth of crime in America, and the corresponding loss of many of our freedoms.

Responsibility for Guilt

One of the most cruel and destructive lies popularized by Sigmund Freud is that aberrant children are always caused by parental mismanagement. The Bible teaches no such thing. For example, the law says, **"The fathers shall not be put to death for the sons, neither shall the sons be put to death for the fathers. Every man shall be put to death for his own sin"** (Deuteronomy 24:16).

In the book of Ezekiel, God explains in great detail how every man, whether father or son, is responsible for himself. Here is part of what Jehovah said: **"Behold, all souls are mine, as the soul of the father, so also the soul of the son is mine. The soul that sins, it shall die. But if a man be just, and does that which is lawful and right ... has executed true**

justice between man and man, has walked in my statutes, and has kept my ordinances, to deal truly, he is just. He shall surely live, says the lord Jehovah. If he begets a son who is a robber, a shedder of blood, and who does any one of these things, and who does not do any of those *duties*, but has even eaten upon the mountains, and defiled his neighbor's wife, has wronged the poor and needy man, has taken by robbery, has not restored the pledge, and has lifted up his eyes to the idols, has committed abomination, has given forth upon interest, and has taken increase, shall he then live? He shall not live. He has done all these abominations. He shall surely die. His blood shall be upon him" (Ezekiel 18:4-13). In the law Jehovah even gave parents the right to have their sinful children killed.

INCORRIGIBLE SONS

In Israel when parents had a stubborn, rebellious, and disobedient son who would not hearken to their discipline, they were to bring him to the elders of their community. And after testifying **"This our son is stubborn and rebellious, he will not obey our voice. He is a glutton, and a drunkard"** (Deuteronomy 21:20), the men of the city were to stone him to death. Knowledge of that kind of punishment is a powerful deterrent to children who might be tempted to rebel.

It should be noticed, it was not the option of parents to take that action; it was their duty. Eli was the high priest and judge of Israel when the prophet Samuel was born. And Eli had two sons who sinned greatly before Jehovah. He lectured them, but made no other effort to control them. Therefore, Jehovah sent a man of God to Eli. Among other things, he said to him, **"Behold, the days come, that I will cut off thine arm, and the arm of thy father's house, that there shall not be an old man in thy house. And thou shall see an enemy *in my* habitation, in all that I shall give Israel, and there shall not be an old man in thy house forever. And the man of thine, *whom* I shall not cut off from my altar, *shall be* to consume thine eyes, and to grieve thy heart. And all the increase of thy house shall die in the flower of their age. And this shall be the sign to thee, that shall come upon thy two sons, on Hophni and Phinehas: In one day they shall die, both of them"** (First Samuel 2:31-34). God warned Eli again later through the child Samuel, who was an assistant to him. However, Eli simply responded, **"It is Jehovah. Let him do what seems him good"** (First Samuel 3:18). Eli was disgustingly weak about his sons. He would not stop their sinful behavior, so God took his life and theirs on the same day. God will not hold us guiltless if we do not try to control our children, even if it means having them put to death. Such thinking horrifies this most sinful generation of Americans. Yet it is legal to murder their innocent unborn children. They love the wicked and hate the innocent.

These warnings from the prophet Isaiah are as timeless as the laws of nature: **"Woe to those who call evil good, and good evil, who put darkness for light, and light for darkness, who put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter! Woe to those who are wise in their own eyes, and prudent in their own sight! Woe to those who are mighty to drink wine, and men of strength to mingle strong drink, who justify the wicked for rewards, and take away the justice of the righteous man from him!"** (Isaiah 5:20-23).

Part 2:11

BODY APPEARANCE

Jehovah was concerned about how his people looked as well as how they behaved. One command says, **"Ye shall not round the corners of your heads, nor shall thou mar the corners of thy beard. Ye shall not make any cuttings in your flesh for the dead, nor print any marks upon you. I am Jehovah"** (Leviticus 19:27-28).

What the command about the corners of their heads and beards probably means is that God did not want his chosen people to have fancy beards or fancy hair cuts. Barbarians do such things, and Jehovah wanted his people to look civilized and dignified. Some Jewish men have misinterpreted that command, so they let their sideburns grow long and hang down in curls. It certainly does not look dignified; it makes them look more like women.

God commanded the sons of Israel not to put things such as tattoos, body paint, or carvings on their skin. All such things are barbaric and demeaning. God wanted his people to look civilized and dignified. It is in times of spiritual decadence when such things become popular. Therefore, in the last few years they have become very popular in America. Indeed, I suspect the majority of young Americans now have one or more tattoos on their bodies, women included.

Another command in the law about appearance concerned the clothing they wore. It says, **"A woman shall not wear that which pertains to a man, neither shall a man put on a woman's garment, for whoever does these things is an abomination to Jehovah thy God"** (Deuteronomy 22:5). Not many years ago this was rarely a problem anywhere in the world. However, since the rise of the women's rebellion called feminism it is now exceedingly common to see women dressed exactly like men. Although it remains rare to see a man dressed in traditional women's clothing. Men who dress like women are still called female impersonators. In contrast, the average woman in America now dresses like a man, even Christian women. They are male impersonators, but nobody else I have ever heard dares call them that.

Whenever I speak with fellow Christians about it, they dismiss this command as no longer applicable, and they consider me to be a crank. They say matters of right and wrong about clothing are determined by the standards of the world and not by the word of God. They are as wrong about that as saying none of the ten commandments are applicable.

Since the rise of feminism there has been a great erosion of the distinctions between men and women. Many women now have very short hair no different in appearance to many men, and there are men whose hair is long enough to fall well below their shoulders, even to their waist. There are men now who wear facial jewelry, and women with tattoos on their bodies. I have seen married couples where the man acted like the wife and mother, while the woman acted like the husband and father. Indeed, most women in America now lead their men around like horses with an invisible bridle. Open your eyes and look: the woman leads while the man follows. They even have baby changing facilities in many men's public toi-

lets so men can perform the role of mothers. That would have been considered an insult during more righteous times.

Consequently, America is fast becoming a matriarchal society, like that of our Negro subculture. The Bible strictly commands the subservience of women to men. Equality of men and women is an delusion. Taking away the God given rights of men, and giving women equal rights in all things, just sets the stage for female dominance. God knows exactly what he is doing and why he commands things he does. Modern men no longer appreciate the significance of women ruling over men from the time of birth until at least adolescence. That is the most important developmental period in life. Therefore, women have enormous power to manipulate and shape the tender minds of children.

Unless children learn very early in life that women are subservient to men, they become conditioned to be subject to women at all ages. That seems to be how matriarchal societies develop. And matriarchal societies are destructive perversions. The rise of lawless teenage gangs in America is one of their bitter fruits. Homosexuality appears to be another one. It is a terrible perversion of sexual behavior, and it is rapidly growing in number, acceptance, and influence. It is a spiritual plague that will destroy any country that tolerates it.

I quote below the words of one well-known nineteenth century commentary written by Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown about the passage Deuteronomy 22:5. Their commentary was published in 1871, and here is what they said:

> … the adoption of the habiliments of the one sex by the other is an outrage on decency, obliterates the distinctions of nature by fostering softness and effeminacy in the man, impudence and boldness in the woman as well as levity and hypocrisy in both; and, in short, it opens the door to an influx of so many evils that all who wear the dress of another sex are pronounced "an abomination unto the Lord."

Those men were exactly correct. The men of that generation had much more wisdom in spiritual matters than men of this one. It grieves my soul to see such spiritual degradation these days. When I was much younger I marveled at the perverse way some people of different countries dressed. They painted their faces, had disheveled and unkempt hair, put bones through their noses, wore gaudy and extravagant apparel, tattooed their bodies, went almost naked, loved violence and other such barbarous things. We called them savages. I never dreamed those things would become popular in American. The paraphernalia used is more modern, but the basic behavior is still savagery.

Dear reader, be not blinded by the popular perversions of the world. Study the holy scriptures to find what God loves and what he hates. Then adjust your way of living to please your Father in heaven. Follow the steps of great Christians such as Paul, who said, **"I beseech you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this age, but be ye transformed by the renewal of your mind, for ye to approve what is the good and acceptable and perfect will of God"** (Romans 12:1-2).

We as Christians must act civilized and dignified, and we must dress and appear that way. For we are the light of the world, as Jesus said: **"Ye are the light of the world. A city setting on a hill cannot be hid, nor do they light a lamp, and put it under the bushel, but on the lampstand, and it shines to all in the house. Thus your light should shine before men, so that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father in the heavens"** (Matthew 5:14-16). And Paul said, **"Do all things without grumblings and arguments, so that ye may become blameless and pure children of God, blameless in the midst of a crooked and perverted generation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world"** (Philippians 2:14-15). Take pride in looking civilized and dignified, even if most around you scoff. The best of the world will admire you, and you will **"glorify your Father in the heavens."**

The Appearance of Our Behavior

Our appearance includes how we behave and not only how we make our bodies look. Indeed, our behavior is the most important part of our appearance. Remember, Jesus said, **"Thus your light should shine before men, so that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father in the heavens"** (Matthew 5:16). And Peter wrote about how women of God should dress themselves when he was emphasizing their inner character. He said, **"Likewise the wives, being subordinate to their own husbands, so that even if any are disobedient to the word, they will be gained without a word by the behavior of the wives, observing, in fear, your pure behavior. Of which let it not be the outward world of braiding of hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on apparel, but the hidden man of the heart, in the incorruptible, of the meek and quiet spirit, which is very precious in the sight of God. For this way formerly also, the holy women, trusting in God, adorned themselves, being subordinate to their own husbands, as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord, whose children ye became, doing good, and not being afraid of anything fearful"** (First Peter 3:1-6).

Our appearance includes how we behave. Therefore, we should all adorn ourselves with righteousness and good works, as well as with a civilized and dignified appearance of our bodies. That way our light will shine before men, and bring glory to our Father in the heavens. Do not join modern Americans and imitate their perversities. Their dress, their behavior, their speech, are all becoming more filthy; it would have appalled former generations.

If you want to live in heaven with God, then hearken to these words of Paul: **"Therefore, Come ye out from among them, and be ye separated, says the Lord, And touch no unclean thing, and I will receive you and will be for a Father to you, and ye will be for sons and daughters to me, says Lord Almighty. Having therefore these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from every filthiness of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in fear of God"** (Second Corinthians 6:17-7:1).

Part 2:12

DIET

BLOOD AND FAT

There are peoples in the world who eat blood. The Germans have a popular dish called blood pudding, and I have seen pictures of people in Africa drinking the blood of freshly slaughtered animals. However, Jehovah strictly commanded his people against eating any blood. Many times in the law of Moses Jehovah gave that command. Indeed, that command was given long before Moses. For after the great flood, when God allowed men to eat flesh, he said to them, **"But flesh with the life of it, *which is* the blood of it, ye shall not eat"** (Genesis 9:4).

The following passage from the law is the most lengthy explanation he gave for why they were not to eat blood: **"And whatever man there is of the house of Israel, or of the strangers that sojourn among them, who eats any manner of blood, I will set my face against that soul who eats blood, and will cut him off from among his people. For the life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it to you upon the altar to make atonement for your souls, for it is the blood that makes atonement by reason of the life. Therefore I said to the sons of Israel, No soul of you shall eat blood, nor shall any stranger that sojourns among you eat blood. And whatever man there is of the sons of Israel, or of the strangers that sojourn among them, who takes any beast or bird in hunting that may be eaten, he shall pour out the blood of it, and cover it with dust. For as to the life of all flesh, the blood of it is with the life of it. Therefore I said to the sons of Israel, Ye shall eat the blood of no manner of flesh, for the life of all flesh is the blood of it. Whoever eats it shall be cut off"** (Leviticus 17:10-14).

Jehovah also said, **"All the fat is Jehovah's. It shall be a perpetual statute throughout your generations in all your dwellings, that ye shall eat neither fat nor blood"** (Leviticus 3:17). Another passage forbids eating the fat of oxen, sheep, goats, and the **"fat of the beast, of which men offer an offering made by fire to Jehovah"** (Leviticus 7:25). However, the first passage says it applies in all their dwellings, which suggests the restriction was against eating any fat. Jehovah did say, however, they could use the fat for "any other service." Fat has been used to make such things as grease and soap, but nothing is said of that in the Bible.

Modern science has learned of the dangers of eating fat, but not yet of the dangers of eating blood. Nevertheless, God forbad those things of his people Israel, and I have no doubt he does not want anybody to ever eat of those things, especially blood. For when the apostles rejected imposing the law of Moses on Gentiles, they did command some restrictions, among which was one against eating blood. Here is what the record says they wrote to the Gentiles: **"For it was decided by the Holy Spirit, and by us, to lay upon you not one greater burden than these necessary things: to abstain from things sacrificed to idols,**

and from blood, and from things strangled, and from fornication, keeping yourselves from which, ye will do well. Be strong" (Acts 15:28-29).

Of course, it is very difficult if not impossible to completely remove all fat and blood from the meat of animals. Therefore, the command obviously does not forbid eating the residual amounts of those things in meat. Nevertheless, the command forbidding Christians to eat animals that were strangled indicates as much blood should be removed from meat as is practical, including draining the blood from animals as soon as they are killed.

Animals They Could Eat

Jehovah said of the beasts they could eat, **"These are the living things which ye may eat among all the beasts that are on the earth. Whatever parts the hoof, and is cloven footed, *and* chews the cud, among the beasts, that may ye eat"** (Leviticus 11:1-3). He also named the ox, the sheep, the (domestic) goat, the hart, the gazelle, the roebuck, the wild goat, the ibex, the antelope, and the chamois.

Among the creatures of the waters, they could eat anything that had both fins and scales. Jehovah said they could eat all clean birds, but none are named. However, the turtle-doves and young pigeons are mentioned as being offered on the altar, so they were obviously clean. They were also allowed to eat of **"all winged creeping things that go upon all fours, which have legs above their feet, with which to leap upon the earth"** (Leviticus 11:21). The words "all fours" was an expression of speech or idiom, because the text then names as examples the locust, the bald locust, the cricket, and the grasshopper. Those were all hopping insects having more than four legs.

Animal They Could Not Eat

The list of animals they could not eat was much longer than of those they could eat. They could not eat, of course, of any that did not conform to the hoof and cud rule. Animals that satisfied only one of those requirements were the camel, the coney, the hare, and the swine. They were therefore classified unclean. They were not allowed to eat them or even to touch their carcasses. Doing so made them unclean. Nothing is told about specific penalties for eating unclean beasts. However, if they touched any of their carcasses they were to wash their clothes and be unclean until the evening. A trespass offering was required when any man became unclean unwittingly. Perhaps the judges were allowed to prescribe the punishment for willfully eating such beasts.

Among the creatures of the waters, they could not eat any that did not have fins or scales. Among the birds that were classified as abominations, one passage (Leviticus 11:13-19) names nineteen plus the bat. Examples of those nineteen are the eagle, the vulture, the sea-gull, and the pelican. It also says all winged creeping things that went on "all fours" were an abomination to them. It probably refers to arthropods (bugs) that do not hop. Eight "creeping things" were mentioned as being unclean to them. Examples were the mouse, the lizard, and the crocodile. Any beast that went on paws was also unclean to them.

Another passage says, **"And every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth is an abomination; it shall not be eaten. Whatever goes upon the belly, and whatever goes upon all fours, or whatever has many feet, even all creeping things that creep upon the earth, them ye shall not eat, for they are an abomination. Ye shall not make yourselves abominable with any creeping thing that creeps, nor shall ye make yourselves unclean with them, that ye should be defiled by it. For I am Jehovah your God. Sanctify yourselves therefore, and become ye holy, since I am holy. Neither shall ye defile yourselves with any manner of creeping thing that moves upon the earth. For I am Jehovah who brought you up out of the land of Egypt, to be your God. Ye shall therefore be holy, for I am holy"** (Leviticus 11:41-45).

Non-Slaughtered Flesh

The sons of Israel were not allowed to eat the flesh of any kind of non-slaughtered animal. Jehovah said, **"Ye shall not eat of anything that dies of itself ... for thou are a holy people to Jehovah thy God"** (Deuteronomy 14:21). However, they were permitted to give it to the sojourner in their midst to eat, or they could sell it to a foreigner. They were also forbidden to eat of any animal that had been attacked by another beast. Jehovah said, **"And ye shall be holy men to me. Therefore ye shall not eat any flesh that is torn of beasts in the field. Ye shall cast it to the dogs"** (Exodus 22:31). The penalty prescribed by the law for violating any of those restrictions was not severe. Violations made them unclean, and that limited where they could go and what they could do afterward. However, if they washed their clothes and bathed in water they would be considered clean at evening.

All of those restrictions are also part of American law for commercial meat. Our government is very strict about what can be sold for food for our bodies. And our high level of national health is one result of those restrictions. In contrast, they now allow virtually anything to be sold for consumption by our minds. Therefore, our spiritual health is in very poor condition.

Why God allowed his people to give or sell anything that died of itself for food to sojourners and foreigners is not clear. Since the penalty for violations was very mild, apparently any danger in eating them was considered small, especially if cooked thoroughly. However, since Jehovah wanted his people to be special and holy he did not want them commonly associated with anything unclean. Perhaps in special circumstances, such as in wartime, they could have eaten of those things, but it would have made them unclean until they cleansed themselves. It seems probable that he wanted them in normal conditions to have standards of cleanliness above those of Gentiles. Hence, the difference in what they could do with that flesh.

Other Laws About Eating

They were commanded not to take the fruit of any tree for the first three years after it was planted. The fourth year the fruit was considered holy and was to be given for praise to Jehovah, which probably meant for the priests. They could eat of the fruit from the fifth year and thereafter.

Also there were regulations about who was allowed to eat of any holy thing, meaning anything devoted or offered to Jehovah. Only the priests, their wives and unmarried children, and their purchased bondservants could eat of the holy things. And if any man ate of such unwittingly he was to replace it and add twenty-percent.

No animal sacrifice was to be made locally. Therefore, no flesh of a blood offering could be eaten locally. However, they could eat flesh locally that was not set apart for Jehovah. Apparently most of the flesh they ate of their flocks and herds was when they made peace offerings on the altar. Therefore, Jehovah said if he enlarged their border, and the chosen place for his altar was too far, then they could eat flesh from their flocks and herds locally **"as of the gazelle, and as of the hart"** (Deuteronomy 12:15). Gazelles and harts were not to be offered on the altar.

They were not allowed to kill a cow or a ewe and its young both in one day. And in three separate places Jehovah said, **"Thou shall not boil a kid in its mother's milk"** (Exodus 23:19, 34:26, Deuteronomy 14:21). He also commanded them not to take a bird and its young or its eggs both. They were to allow the bird to go free. He said, **"... that it may be well with thee, and that thou may prolong thy days"** (Deuteronomy 22:7). Doing any of those things would have shown callousness to the animals. And apparently being callous toward animals would have had a detrimental effect on how they treated each other.

Since they apparently had few if any rural restaurants they were allowed to eat of their neighbor's crops. That would have spared travelers the burden of carrying much food on journeys, and it would have spared the farmers the burden of having to give the travelers permission each time. An example of that being done by Jesus' disciples is given in the New Testament (see Luke 6:1). Apparently the loss to the farmers was minimal, and the goodwill gained would have outweighed that loss. It would also have eliminated the temptation to steal, which would have undermined their feelings toward each other. The law said, **"When thou come into thy neighbor's vineyard, then thou may eat thy fill of grapes at thine own pleasure, but thou shall not put any in thy vessel. When thou come into thy neighbor's standing grain, then thou may pluck the ears with thy hand, but thou shall not move a sickle to thy neighbor's standing grain"** (Deuteronomy 23:24-25).

Christians and Diet

Being careful with our diet is important for our physical health. For Jehovah made it clear our bodies can be defiled by things that we eat. And he wants us to emphasize cleanliness within and without. Nevertheless, Christians are under no legal restrictions about what they eat, except for blood and things strangled. For the New Testament says, **"And having summoned all the people, he** [Jesus] **said to them, Hear me all of you, and understand. There is nothing outside the man, entering into him that can defile him, but the things coming out of him those are the things that defile the man. If any man has ears to hear, let him hear.**

"And when he entered into a house from the crowd, his disciples questioned him about the parable. And he says to them, Are also ye so without understanding? Do ye not

perceive that everything outside that enters into the man cannot defile him, because it does not enter into his heart, but into the belly, and goes out into the toilet (making all foods clean)? And he said, That which comes out of the man, that defiles the man. For from inside the heart of men proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetings, wickednesses, deceit, licentiousness, an evil eye, reviling, pride, foolishness. All these evil things come from inside, and defile the man" (Mark 7:14-23).

Mark, the author of that text, added **"making all foods clean"** as a commentary to what Jesus taught. In other words when Jesus said there was nothing entering into a man that can defile him, that made all foods clean. Of course, the defilement Jesus was speaking about was spiritual, for toxic substances that are ingested will certainly defile the body of a man. Christians are under the law of liberty, and can therefore eat any kind of food. Nevertheless, that does not mean we can eat with impunity. Pork was forbidden under the law of Moses, but is commonly eaten by Christians. Pork is a very dangerous food to eat because the meat is often full of parasites and their eggs. However, careful cooking can kill those things and make the meat safer. Sanitary breeding and rearing can also reduce that danger.

Part 2:13

SERVANTS

Regarding terminology, the law speaks of three basic kinds of servants: (1) men hired to perform a certain job, (2) men who committed themselves by contract to service for a certain length of time, and (3) men who were committed to lifelong service. Bondmen and bondwomen (or bondmaids) were those who were under bondage for service; that is, they were committed for a certain length of time, whether for a few years or for life. Unlike the modern definition of bondservant, in Israel bondservants were to be paid in some way. Even those committed to lifelong service were not slaves as that term is used today. Jehovah frequently reminded his people how they had been in bondage in Egypt, and he commanded them to show kindness to all who were weak and lowly, including their bondmen. He said, for example, **"Thou shall not distort the justice *due* to the sojourner, *or* to the fatherless, nor take the widow's raiment to pledge, but thou shall remember that thou were a bondman in Egypt, and Jehovah thy God redeemed thee from there. Therefore I command thee to do this thing"** (Deuteronomy 24:17-18). Notice he warned his people not to be unjust to them.

SLAVERY

In order to understand what the Bible teaches about bond service you need to know more about the word slavery. That word only occurs twice in the KJV and four times in the ASV. The modern versions are those that use it frequently. For example, the RSV uses it almost two hundred times. And by so doing they have cast reproach on the Bible. For that word has now been demonized by those who hate our national forefathers. I am not going to defend all that our forefathers did, but it was not nearly as bad as this pagan generation portrays it. When I visited Hong Kong I saw a show on TV that portrayed nineteenth century Americans as cruel and murderous toward Chinese immigrants. The only good Americans according to that show were the American Indians. It was almost all anti-American propaganda full of deceit. And the same can be said for pagan America's portrayals of slave owners in this country.

Men do not abuse their animals, so why would men, especially of a nation of Christians, abuse their slaves? They were a source of labor for them, and needed to be properly cared for. However, the southern states did begin to treat their slaves more like their animals than they did like men, and that was wrong. It was against the law for them to escape, and some states passed laws in the nineteenth century that outlawed teaching Negroes to read and write. Therefore, American slavery became more unrighteous. I am convinced the terrible civil war was God's punishment of the slave states for those kinds of things.

Nevertheless, one of the great benefits of being a slave in America was that when they were freed (by the blood of non-Negroes) they became citizens of this country. Virtually every Negro in America today is far better off than the great majority of Negroes in Africa where they originated. And I doubt if one in a million would want to live there. Indeed, I have

heard some Negroes who have visited Africa come back and confess that fact. Our forefathers are vilified and their sins exaggerated because they were Christians, and the enemies of Christ now prevail. Dear reader, beware of what is written, spoken, and portrayed about our forefathers. Those who now control the publishing industry, the educational system, the entertainment business, and the communications media all hate Christ and his church. And what truth they present is laced with lies and deceit.

Actually, there was another practice of slavery in America that was much worse than that of the Negroes in the southern states. I am referring to the military conscription or draft. Very few people know that Abraham Lincoln was the creator of that form of American slavery. Young men were forced by law to go where they did not want to go, and do what they did not want to do. And tens of thousands of them died young in the process. Moreover, many of those slaves (draftees) were exposed to things that were harsh and demanding. And much of the labor that was required of them was in the worse kind of conditions. They often received inadequate rest, and their food was usually of the bare essentials. I doubt if many Negro slaves in America were subjected to half their rigors.

When my son was in college, after returning from service in the U.S. Navy, he debated with some students about the treatment of criminals in our prisons. He told them his life aboard ship was far more uncomfortable and demanding than those of prisoners in our jails. Be not deceived by all the propaganda proclaimed as truth since the birth of pagan America in the nineteen sixties.

HIRED SERVICE

In the law of Moses the difference between hired service and bond service for the sons of Israel was somewhat similar to the difference between civilian employment and military service in modern America. A poor man could sell himself to be a bondservant, which meant serving for the time of his contract, just like an enlistee in our military. The time of service was normally three years (see Isaiah 16:14). There were advantages and disadvantages to a man who sold himself that way. He was paid in advance, and he had the security of room and board during his time of service. However, he was obligated to serve his time.

There is another difference between servants in ancient Israel and today. Under the law of Moses when married men finished their service they were allowed to take their wives with them. However, if a servant was given a woman for a wife from his master, she and the resulting children were to remain with his master. That provision in the law was no doubt like the one for divorce, and the tradition of concubines. They were not things God preferred but only tolerated.

There is some evidence servants also earned money while they served, and I suspect a man could have paid his master for his wife and children. But apparently that was left to the discretion of his master. If the former servant was a bad husband, his master could have saved the woman and the children from him that way. Otherwise it would have been cruel and economically foolish for him not to sell the woman and the children to him. Nevertheless, the law is silent about it.

Jehovah did not allow the masters of servants to treat them like bondmen. The law said to them, **"**... **thou shall not impose upon him servile labor. He shall be with thee as a hired servant, and as a sojourner. He shall serve with thee to the year of jubilee. Then he shall go out from thee, he and his sons with him, and shall return to his own family. And he shall return to the possession of his fathers. For they are my servants, whom I brought forth out of the land of Egypt. They shall not be sold as bondmen. Thou shall not rule over him with rigor, but shall fear thy God"** (Leviticus 25:39-43).

Regarding women servants, there was no foolishness about women's equality in the law of Moses. The law said a father could sell his daughter, but nothing is ever said about selling a son. About daughters, Moses said, **"And if a man sells his daughter to be a maid-servant, she shall not go out as the men-servants do"** (Exodus 21:7). A purchased woman was like a concubine, a second-class wife. Her owner could have her for himself or for his son. Which meant her master was also either her husband or her father-in-law. And if there were other wives he could not diminish her rights of food and raiment, or "her duty of marriage," which meant having children. Otherwise he was to release her without cost. Moreover, she could never be sold to a foreign people.

Redeeming hired servants

Any son of Israel who sold himself to be a bondservant for a rich stranger or sojourner could be redeemed. The law says that any of his near kin could redeem him at any time. The only thing required was to pay back the value of the time remaining of his service. The law also said the servant could redeem himself if he became rich enough, which suggests bondservants were paid a salary as well as the amount of his sale. That is how re-enlistments in our military service are often encouraged. The man is given a large bonus payment as well as his regular salary.

Maximum length of service

The normal term of service was three years. A man could serve longer, but no more than six years. For the law says, **"If thy brother, a Hebrew man, or a Hebrew woman, is sold to thee, and serves thee six years, then in the seventh year thou shall let him go free from thee. And when thou let him go free from thee, thou shall not let him go empty. Thou shall furnish him liberally out of thy flock, and out of thy threshing-floor, and out of thy winepress"** (Deuteronomy 15:12-14). Moses said they were to give to the man as God had blessed them. And he reminded them how they had been bondmen in Egypt, and Jehovah redeemed them.

Six years was the maximum term of service. However, another passage suggests the man could continue selling himself until the jubilee. And he probably could sell himself again to the same master, such as continued reenlistment. He probably could even have sold himself again after jubilee. However, since all land was returned to its original owner, then if a man had a land inheritance he would have had less reason to sell himself.

There was a law whereby a bondservant in Israel could commit himself to lifelong service (the text says "forever"). If the man loved his master and wanted to remain with him, his

only requirement was to have a hole punched in his ear with an awl as a visible sign of his lifelong commitment. He could also keep the wife his master gave him, and the children she bore for him.

Alien Bondmen

The law allowed Israelites to purchase permanent bondmen and bondmaids from the strangers who lived among them or from the nations around them. (That did not include the inhabitants of their promised land, whom they were commanded to exterminate.) The law says, **"... they shall be your possession. And ye shall make them an inheritance for your sons after you, to hold for a possession. Ye shall take your permanent bondmen from them, but over your brothers the sons of Israel ye shall not rule, one over another, with rigor"** (Leviticus 25:45-46).

Jehovah wanted his people to be free. Therefore, he gave them many opportunities to free themselves from bondservice. That is probably one reason he allowed his people to purchase their permanent servants from other nations. Not only were those servants permanent, but the sons of Israel could rule over them "with rigor," which they could not do to their fellow Israelites.

Nevertheless, those alien servants were not like the Negro slaves in America. For the law of Moses gave bondservants the right to leave their masters: **"Thou shall not deliver to his master a servant who is escaped from his master to thee. He shall dwell with thee, in the midst of thee, in the place which he shall choose within one of thy gates, where it pleases him best. Thou shall not oppress him"** (Deuteronomy 23:15-16). That law applied to the sons of Israel as well as to the alien bondservants. If a bondservant escaped he was probably ineligible for any other labor contract. He could probably have worked for wages, but could not have the security of bondservice.

It is quite possible alien servants were glad to be purchased by sons of Israel even though their service would be permanent. Many men and women from poor countries come to prosperous ones and are quite willing to work at the most menial tasks as humble servants. It gives them security and prosperity they could never have in their native lands. The fact that in ancient Israel the law allowed them to escape indicates their masters were to keep them satisfied with their lot. They could not have been oppressed slaves. Jehovah condemned such treatment many times when he reminded his people of how they were in Egypt.

Part 2:14

THE WEAK AND LOWLY

THE POOR

Moses said they would always have the poor: **"For the poor will never cease out of the land"** (Deuteronomy 15:11). Yet he said a few words earlier, **"However there shall be no poor with thee (for Jehovah will surely bless thee in the land which Jehovah thy God gives thee for an inheritance to possess it), if only thou diligently hearken to the voice of Jehovah thy God, to observe to do all this commandment which I command thee this day"** (Deuteronomy 15:4-5). He was not contradicting himself. In this second passage he was apparently referring to the poor in an absolute sense, meaning those dressed in rags, eating poorly, dwelling in the streets or in shacks. There would be none of them if they obeyed the voice of Jehovah. However, they would always have the poor in a relative sense. Meaning those at the lowest economic level, with the least possessions.

Wages of the poor

The law of Moses commanded the sons of Israel not to oppress a hired servant who was poor and needy, whether he was a brother Israelite or a sojourner in their land. They were not to withhold their wages, but were to pay them each day. The text says, **"... he is poor, and sets his heart upon it, lest he cry against thee to Jehovah, and it be sin to thee"** (Deuteronomy 24:15).

That was another a law commanding them to show kindness to the poor and needy, whether a citizen or a foreigner. Those who are very poor live, as the expression says, "from hand to mouth." They must spend what little they have as soon as they get it. Such poor are rare in modern America. Therefore, wages are rarely paid daily, except for single-day jobs. The very poor with little or nothing, who are more numerous in some other countries, should indeed be paid frequently. For they have no excess to draw upon when needed. There are, however, irresponsible men even in America earning good wages who squander it as soon as they are paid. God does not expect us to accommodate for such men.

Leave some crops at harvest

Farmers were not to reap the harvest of their crops entirely. They were to leave the crop at the edges of their fields. Neither were they to gather the gleaning of their harvest, nor of the fallen fruit of their vineyards. Jehovah said, **"Thou shall leave them for the poor man and for the sojourner. I am Jehovah your God"** (Leviticus 19:10).

That was another provision for the poor and the visitors of their land. It was a form of welfare that is much superior to the social systems of modern times. For it required the recipient to go out and work in harvesting as well. Moreover, they could not harvest or glean the normal crops. They were given what remained of a harvest. In contrast, our welfare

state simply hands out money, and requires no labor. That has encouraged indolence and dependency among a large segment of the population.

Notice there was no command about how much the farmer was to leave for the poor and the sojourner. Apparently he could leave a narrow strip along the border of his field, or a wide strip. And he could gather slowly and completely, or he could leave more behind. The farmer was free to decide how much to harvest and how much to leave. That is an important liberty, because there are always various circumstances that would determine how much a farmer could afford to give. A rich farmer could leave much more without suffering from any deprivation.

Jehovah accounts for the ability to give when he considers our generosity. For Jesus once told his disciples about the relativity of giving: **"And having sat down opposite the treasury, Jesus watched how the multitude cast money into the treasury, and many rich men cast in much. And one poor widow having come, she cast in two mites, which are a quadrans. And having summoned his disciples, he says to them, Truly I say to you, that this poor widow cast in more than all those who are casting into the treasury. For they all cast in from that which is abundant to them, but she from her need cast in all, as many things she had, her whole living"** (Mark 12:41-44). Of course that does not mean we should all give our whole living. Our generosity is like everything else; it should be done wisely and discretely according to varying circumstances.

Jehovah also commanded, **"When thou reap thy harvest in thy field, and have forgotten a sheaf in the field, thou shall not go again to fetch it. It shall be for the sojourner, for the fatherless, and for the widow, that Jehovah thy God may bless thee in all the work of thy hands. When thou beat thine olive tree, thou shall not go over the boughs again. It shall be for the sojourner, for the fatherless, and for the widow. When thou gather of thy vineyard, thou shall not glean it behind thee. It shall be for the sojourner, for the fatherless, and for the widow. And thou shall remember that thou were a bondman in the land of Egypt. Therefore I command thee to do this thing"** (Deuteronomy 24:19-22).

The sojourner, the fatherless, and the widow were commonly the ones who had the least opportunities to support themselves, and that was one way God wanted them able to have food. It was like a tax on the farmers, because the residue of their crops were required to be available for the needy. God even included the sheaf they might have inadvertently left behind. That still meant, however, that the sojourner, the fatherless, and the widow were required to go and harvest that residue. And God again commanded them to remember how they had been bondmen in Egypt.

One thing I must mention about gleaning. They were apparently required to ask permission of the farmer before they could glean. For that was the case of the widow Ruth when she came to Bethlehem with her widowed mother-in-law Naomi, and she wanted to glean in the field of Boaz. The Bible says, **"Then Boaz said to his servant who was set over the reapers, Whose damsel is this? And the servant who was set over the reapers answered and said, It is the Moabite damsel who came back with Naomi out of the**

country of Moab. And she said, Let me glean, I pray you, and gather behind the reapers among the sheaves. So she came, and has continued even from the morning until now, except that she tarried a little in the house" (Ruth 2:5-7).

The third-year tithe

The law says, **"At the end of every three years thou shall bring forth all the tithe of thine increase in the same year, and shall lay it up within thy gates. And the Levite, because he has no portion nor inheritance with thee, and the sojourner, and the fatherless, and the widow, who are within thy gates, shall come, and shall eat and be satisfied, that Jehovah thy God may bless thee in all the work of thy hand which thou do"** (Deuteronomy 14:28-29). I speak more about that in Part 2:7 of this book, which is about the laws of tithing.

Other Needy Souls

Jehovah is kind and compassionate, and he will not tolerate cruelty, especially toward the weak and lowly. Here is one warning he gave about widows and orphans: **"Ye shall not afflict any widow, or fatherless child. If thou afflict them at all, and they cry at all to me, I will surely hear their cry, and my wrath shall grow hot, and I will kill you with the sword, and your wives shall be widows, and your sons fatherless"** (Exodus 22:22-24).

Nor would he tolerate the mistreatment of the handicapped, as the following command shows: **"Thou shall not curse the deaf, nor put a stumbling block before the blind, but thou shall fear thy God. I am Jehovah"** (Leviticus 19:14). However, he was not so unreasonable as to command his people to give them all the privileges of healthy men. For example, he would not allow any man of the sons of Aaron who was handicapped or had a blemish to serve at the altar or enter into the tabernacle. But they were to be given the right to eat of the offerings with the other priests. Moreover, as the above passage says, neither would he allow his people to mistreat them.

One of the fine things about modern America is our concern for the handicapped. Laws have been passed, and special provisions have been made to aid them. However, modern reliance upon the force of law has made many of those provisions yokes upon employers, because they take away their right to make judgments. And without being able to choose wisely among the handicapped, hiring them now entails much risk.

The Sojourner

Travelers and foreigners are always in a weaker position and more vulnerable than native citizens. They lack the knowledge and the social relationships that can be used to protect and defend themselves. Therefore, Jehovah classified them with widows and orphans. He said, **"Thou shall not distort the justice *due* to the sojourner, *or* to the fatherless, nor take the widow's raiment to pledge, but thou shall remember that thou were a bondman in Egypt, and Jehovah thy God redeemed thee from there. Therefore I command thee to do this thing"** (Deuteronomy 24:17-18).

In several places Jehovah warned not to oppress foreigners in their land. He said, **"And thou shall not wrong a sojourner, neither shall thou oppress him, for ye were sojourners in the land of Egypt"** (Exodus 22:21). In another passage he said, **"And thou shall not oppress a sojourner, for ye know the heart of a sojourner, since ye were sojourners in the land of Egypt"** (Exodus 23:9).

He even commanded them to love foreigners. He said, **"Love ye therefore the sojourner, for ye were sojourners in the land of Egypt"** (Deuteronomy 10:19). And again he said, **"And if a stranger sojourns with thee in your land, ye shall not do him wrong. The stranger that sojourns with you shall be to you as the home-born among you, and thou shall love him as thyself, for ye were sojourners in the land of Egypt. I am Jehovah your God"** (Leviticus 19:33-34).

Another fine thing about America is how our people love foreigners in our midst. There are few if any other nations that are so generous and open toward peoples of other lands. And that is what Jehovah wanted for his people. Of course, that kind of treatment was never intended to apply to law violators, such as illegal immigrants.

Christians and Generosity

As you can see Jehovah wanted his people to be generous to the weak and the lowly. Jesus also commanded his disciples to be generous. However, he also expects us to be wise, and use good judgment in all that we do, including our generosity. For example, Jesus' command, **"Give to him who asks thee, and turn thou not away from him who wants to borrow from thee"** (Matthew 5:42), should not be taken as a rigid legalism, but rather as a principle of compassion to be used with good judgment. For is that not how God himself gives? And we are commanded to imitate him, for Paul said: **"Become ye therefore imitators of God, as beloved children"** (Ephesians 5:1).

Consider the following promise from our Lord: **"Ask, and it will be given you. Seek, and ye will find. Knock, and it will be opened to you. For every man who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened"** (Matthew 7:7-8). Now, does any man think that if he were to ask God to immediately give him a million dollars, that God would give it? Yet does not the scripture say, **"For every man who asks receives?"**

It is, therefore, ridiculous to interpret such commands as, **"Give to him who asks thee"** in an absolute literal sense. God moderates his compassion with good judgment when answering requests, and he expects us to do the same. Indeed, after teaching us to ask, seek, and knock, Jesus gave an illustration of how a father gives to his sons, saying, **"Or what man is there of you, whom if his son ask bread, will he give him a stone? Or if he ask a fish, will he give him a serpent? If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?"** (Matthew 7:9-10). And every wise father knows that it is foolish and harmful to give his children everything they ask for.

Thus, I think we can confidently conclude that God, our heavenly Father, considers our need and our fitness, and then uses his judgment about what would be best for us, answering in his own time and way. Moreover, his answer may even be to give us nothing. For there were times when Jesus refused a request. Here are three examples:

> **Then some of the scholars and Pharisees answered, saying, Teacher, we want to see a sign from thee. But having answered, he said to them, An evil and adulterous generation seeks after a sign, and no sign will be given to it except the sign of Jonah the prophet** (Matthew 12:38-39).
>
> **Now when Herod saw Jesus, he was exceedingly glad, for he was wanting of a considerable time to see him, because of hearing many things about him, and he hoped to see some sign happening by him. And he interrogated him in considerable words, but he answered him nothing** (Luke 23:8-9).
>
> **Indeed therefore having come together, they** [his disciples] **questioned him, saying, Lord, do thou restore the kingdom to Israel at this time? And he said to them, It is not for you to know times or seasons, which the Father established in his own authority** (Acts 1:6-7).

There are other commands that are relevant to our giving to make it more judicious. For example, when wandering idlers ask us for food or money, does Jesus' command, **"Give to him who asks thee"** require that we give to them? No, because another command forbids giving to such men. Paul, who taught the will of Jesus, said, **"For even when we were with you we commanded you this, that if any man will not work, neither let him eat. For we hear of some who walk among you disorderly, not working at all, but being busybodies. Now to such men we command and exhort by our Lord Jesus Christ, that, working with quietness, they should eat their own bread"** (Second Thessalonians 3:10-12).

Jesus also warned against giving to certain kinds of men, saying, **"Do not give what is holy to the dogs, nor cast your pearls before the swine, lest they trample them by their feet, and having turn back may lacerate you"** (Matthew 7:6). Our Lord was certainly not referring to literal dogs and pigs. When Jesus warned against giving to dogs and swine he was talking about some kinds of men. Indeed, there are other scriptures referring to certain sinful men as dogs: **"Beware of the dogs, beware of the evil workmen, beware of the excision"** (Philippians 3:2) and, **"Outside are the dogs, and the sorcerers, and the fornicators, and the murderers, and the idolaters, and every man who loves and makes a lie"** (Revelation 22:15). Indeed, the righteous man Job, during the time of his affliction, spoke of how he was persecuted by men who were worse than dogs: **"But now those who are younger than I have me in derision, whose fathers I disdained to set with the dogs of my flock"** (Job 30:1).

Certainly, we should normally try to aid any innocent man whose life is in danger. And every innocent man should be treated courteously and decently. But men who live like dogs and pigs are not worthy of our treasures. When did Jesus ever give to such kind? He would not even answer King Herod when he questioned him. Which reminds me of a time when

the prophet Elisha was approached by the kings of Judah and Israel. He said to Jehoram, the evil king of Israel, **"As Jehovah of hosts lives, before whom I stand, surely, were it not that I regard the presence of Jehoshaphat the king of Judah, I would not look toward thee, nor see thee"** (Second Kings 3:14).

Of course, men can repent and change their lives. Then we can respond to them, but cautiously and judiciously, testing them first, because men can be diabolically crafty and hypocritical. And like our giving, forgiving should also be done judiciously.

Part 2:15

VOWS

A vow is a solemn promise. And vows are often made to God as part of a request from him. God considers vows made to him as very serious commitments that must be kept. Too often people dismiss their part when God answers their vow. This is what Moses said about keeping vows: **"When thou shall vow a vow to Jehovah thy God, thou shall not be slack to pay it. For Jehovah thy God will surely require it of thee, and it would be sin in thee. But if thou shall forbear to vow, it shall be no sin in thee. That which has gone out of thy lips thou shall observe and do, according as thou have vowed to Jehovah thy God, a freewill offering, which thou have promised with thy mouth"** (Deuteronomy 23:21-23). Notice he said Jehovah would surely require it, and it would be sin if it was not kept. He also warned about being slack to pay it.

VOWS BY MEN AND WOMEN

A man was required to do according to whatever oath he swore, but a vow by a woman was to be treated differently. Moses said a father could cancel a vow made by a daughter living in his house when he first heard of it. However, if he said nothing that day, it would stand. He said Jehovah would forgive her vow if her father disallowed it.

In the same way, a husband could cancel a vow made by his wife when he first heard of it. Moses said her husband could **"make void her vow which is upon her, and the rash utterance of her lips, with which she has bound her soul. And Jehovah will forgive her"** (Numbers 30:8). If her husband said nothing that day, her vow would stand. However, the vow of a widow or divorcee, having no husband, would be binding.

ESTIMATION OF VALUE

Moses gave a set of commandments about making evaluations that were apparently for the purpose of redeeming things vowed. Those commands begin as follows: **"When a man shall accomplish a vow, the persons shall be for Jehovah by thy estimation. And thy estimation shall be of the male from twenty years old even to sixty years old, even thy estimation shall be fifty shekels of silver, after the shekel of the sanctuary"** (Leviticus 27:2-3). And the text continues that way about valuating men and women of different ages, and valuating beasts, houses, and fields.

What the text seems to say is that if a man vowed someone or something, and then decided he wanted to keep what he vowed he could pay the valuation instead. Vows are often made during times of distress, and so they can be made rashly without careful forethought. Here is a passage that mentions swearing rashly: **"Or if a soul swears rashly with his lips to do evil, or to do good, whatever it be that a man shall utter rashly with an oath, and it be hid from him, when he realizes it, then he shall be guilty in one of these"** (Leviticus 5:4).

Because vows are often made rashly, apparently in his mercy Jehovah allowed them to redeem what they vowed by paying the valuation. Valuations were even commanded whether a man wanted to redeem what he vowed or not. Jehovah may have required them in order to give the man the opportunity to make a knowledgeable decision. That way there would be less chance of regret afterward.

The standard value of persons depended upon the age and gender of the one vowed. However, the priest could reduce the valuation according to the ability to pay. That command says, **"But if he be poorer than thy estimation, then he shall be set before the priest, and the priest shall value him; according to the ability of him who vowed shall the priest value him"** (Leviticus 27:8). In the table below are the valuations in shekels in the order given in the text. Those amounts appear to reflect the value of the person for overall productive labor.

Age	Male	Female
20 to 60 years	50	30
5 to 20 years	20	10
1 month to 5 years	5	3
60 years and older	15	10

Beasts that were vowed for an oblation were not to be changed or substituted. Unclean beasts were to be valued by the priest, and the fifth part of the valuation was to be added to it. However, a man could not vow to sanctify the firstborn male of beasts. They were already reserved for Jehovah. The text says, **"Only the firstling among beasts, which is made a firstling to Jehovah, no man shall sanctify it, whether it be ox or sheep, it is Jehovah's"** (Leviticus 27:26). Like the qualified beasts, houses could be redeemed with the valuation plus the fifth part of it.

The law for redeeming fields was more complicated. Part of a man's field could be sanctified to Jehovah, and its value was estimated. The valuation was based upon "the sowing of it," which probably meant the value of its crops. There were two conditions described in the law about when a field was sanctified. The first says, **"If he sanctifies his field from the year of jubilee, according to thy estimation it shall stand"** (Leviticus 27:17). That probably means during the year of jubilee. The other condition was about sanctifying the field after the jubilee. The valuation in that case was adjusted for the years that remained until the next jubilee.

If a man wanted to redeem his field, as with the beasts and houses he was to pay the valuation plus the fifth part of it. That was the case whether the field was part of his inheritance or if he had purchased it. If it was part of his inheritance, and he did not redeem it, then at the jubilee it would become holy to Jehovah permanently, as a field set apart. The law says,

"the possession of it shall be the priest's" (Leviticus 27:21). However, for a sanctified field that had been purchased, the land was to return to its original owner.

Whatever Is Set Apart

The law speaks of things "set apart to Jehovah," which included men, beasts, and fields. Those things could not be sold or redeemed. The law says, **"Notwithstanding, nothing set apart, that a man shall set apart to Jehovah of all that he has, whether of man or beast, or of the field of his possession, shall be sold or redeemed; everything set apart is most holy to Jehovah"** (Leviticus 27:28). However, what exactly is meant by set apart to Jehovah is not stated. Some versions use the word devoted instead of set apart. The first command about their firstborn males given in Exodus used the expression **"set apart to Jehovah"** (Exodus 13:12). However, that command only involved men and beasts, while the above law in Leviticus also mentions fields.

Perhaps this law in Leviticus involved setting something apart to Jehovah voluntarily independent of a vow. Things sanctified to Jehovah by a vow could be redeemed. However, the above law did not allow the man, beast, or field set apart to Jehovah to be sold or redeemed. Why there was the difference is not explained. Since many if not most vows are made while in distress, perhaps God was more tolerant about allowing what had been vowed to be redeemed. Remember, the sons of Israel earlier gave many things to Jehovah for building the tabernacle, and those things were set apart to Jehovah independent of a vow. Why houses were included in the laws for vows but are not mentioned in this one is also not clear. Perhaps the statement **"man or beast, or of the field of his possession"** was not meant to be inclusive.

Vow of the Nazirite

A man or a woman could make the Nazirite vow, but what was its purpose is never stated. The description says it was to be a designated time **"in which he separates himself to Jehovah"** (Numbers 6:5) for holiness. But what was done during that time of separation is never told. Perhaps it depended upon why a man wanted the separation.

The requirements of the vow were to (1) drink no strong drink, (2) eat or drink nothing from the grapevine, (3) not cut the hair of his head, but allow it to grow long, and (4) not come near any dead body, including those of his nearest kin. The text says that during the time of his vow, his separation to God is upon his head, and he is holy to Jehovah.

If a man died suddenly beside him he became defiled, and was required to (1) shave his head, (2) make some offerings, and (3) start his time all over. After his days were fulfilled he was to (1) make a burnt offering, a sin offering, and a peace offering, and (2) shave his head and burn the hair with the peace offering.

The Bible only mentions one man who was a Nazirite for life: **"And the agent of Jehovah appeared to the woman, and said to her, Behold now, thou are barren, and do not bear, but thou shall conceive, and bear a son. Now therefore beware, I pray thee, and drink no wine nor strong drink, and do not eat any unclean thing, for, lo, thou shall**

conceive, and bear a son. And no razor shall come upon his head, for the child shall be a Nazirite to God from the womb. And he shall begin to save Israel out of the hand of the Philistines" (Judges 13:3-5). That child was Samson. However, the prophet Samuel may also have been a Nazirite for life. His mother Hannah was another woman who had been barren, and the scripture says, **"And she vowed a vow, and said, O Jehovah of hosts, if thou will indeed look on the affliction of thy handmaid, and remember me, and not forget thy handmaid, but will give to thy handmaid a man-child, then I will give him to Jehovah all the days of his life, and there shall no razor come upon his head"** (First Samuel 1:11).

VOWS BY CHRISTIANS

There are no instructions in the New Testament about vows. However, there are two examples given. One was about the apostle Paul having a vow. The text says, **"But Paul, who still remained considerable days with the brothers, having separated, sailed away to Syria (and with him Priscilla and Aquila), having shaved his head in Cenchrea, for he had a vow"** (Acts 18:18). Shaving the head was required after fulfilling a Nazirite vow, which suggests the kind of vow he made. Nothing more is said about his vow.

The other reference to a vow is when Paul last went to Jerusalem. He had fulfilled his duty to bring the good news of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles, and now he wanted to try to convert his countrymen. When he met with the elders of the church in Jerusalem, they said he had the reputation there of opposing the law of Moses. Here is what they recommended he do to correct that: **"Therefore do this that we say to thee. Four men are with us who have a vow on themselves. Having taken these, be purified with them. And pay expenses for them, so that they may shave the head. And all may know, that things of which they have been informed about thee, are nothing, but thou thyself also walk orderly, keeping the law"** (Acts 21:23-24). That suggests those four men must have made a Nazirite vow. Paul's actions that way may have succeeded in persuading the Christians there, but it did not succeed with the unbelieving Jews. As the Holy Spirit had warned Paul earlier, he was rejected by them. After some Jews caused a riot against him in the temple, Paul was imprisoned by the Romans and tried several times. He was finally sent to Rome for trial before Caesar.

The Nazirite vow was given for the sons of Israel, and like the rest of the system of the law of Moses, it is no longer in effect. Indeed, it cannot be kept because of the requirements about sacrifices with it. Vows can be made by Christians, but it should never be forgotten how serious they are. For the Bible teaches that God will punish those who do not keep their part properly. Remember this passage: **"When thou shall vow a vow to Jehovah thy God, thou shall not be slack to pay it. For Jehovah thy God will surely require it of thee, and it would be sin in thee. But if thou shall forbear to vow, it shall be no sin in thee. That which has gone out of thy lips thou shall observe and do, according as thou have vowed to Jehovah thy God, a freewill offering, which thou have promised with thy mouth"** (Deuteronomy 23:21-23). Never make a vow without thinking very seriously about it. And if it is possible take plenty of time before committing yourself.

Part 2:16

GOING TO WAR

PREPARING THE ARMIES

The law of Moses allowed some men to leave an army before the fighting began and go home. They included men with new houses, new vineyards, new wives, and even men who were fearful. Moses commanded, **"And the officers shall speak to the people, saying, What man is there who has built a new house, and has not dedicated it? Let him go and return to his house, lest he die in the battle, and another man dedicate it. And what man is there who has planted a vineyard, and has not used the fruit of it? Let him go and return to his house, lest he die in the battle, and another man use the fruit of it. And what man is there who has betrothed a wife, and has not taken her? Let him go and return to his house, lest he die in the battle, and another man take her. And the officers shall speak further to the people, and they shall say, What man is there who is fearful and faint-hearted? Let him go and return to his house, lest his brother's heart melt as his heart"** (Deuteronomy 20:5-8). What other army ever had regulations with such consideration for its men? After giving the men that opportunity to go home, the officers were then to appoint captains of the armies to lead them. I must add, however, that men were often eager to be a part of an army because of their share of profits from the plunder.

OFFER TERMS OF PEACE

Moses said they should first offer terms of peace to a city before fighting against it. That meant foreign cities that were not in their promised land. The citizens in the cities of their promised land were to be utterly destroyed. Jehovah had condemned them to extermination because of all their abominations. If a city in a foreign country gave an answer of peace and surrendered, then the city was to become subject to the sons of Israel and serve them. However, if they refused then they were to besiege the city. And when Jehovah delivered it into their hand they were to slay every male in it. Only the women and little children were to be spared and taken as spoil with the cattle and other plunder from the city.

There were many causes that gave justification for the sons of Israel to go after foreign cities. Surrounding nations often sent raiding parties into Israel to plunder and destroy. And of course, they would sometimes declare war and invade Israel with their armies. Hence, Jehovah gave those commandments about the conquest of foreign cities.

TREES USED IN WAR

The sons of Israel were not allowed to cut down fruit bearing trees when they were besieging a city for a long time. They were to use them for food. They were, however, allowed to cut down other trees to build bulwarks against an enemy city.

Purification After War

The record says that after the sons of Israel fought a war Moses commanded them to remain outside the camp for seven days. And all of them who had slain anybody or who had touched a corpse were to purify themselves on the third and seventh days, they and their captives. And every garment of leather or of goats hair, and everything of wood was to be purified. Although not specifically stated, the implication is that those were ordinances from Jehovah.

After Moses gave those commands, Eleazar the high priest said, **"This is the statute of the law which Jehovah has commanded Moses"** (Numbers 31:21). Then he told the soldiers to first purify all the metal objects by fire, and afterward with the water of impurity. And whatever could not be purified by fire was to go through the water. The water of impurity was made with the ashes of the red heifer, which is discussed in Part 2:17 of this book. They were also to wash their clothes on the seventh day to be clean. Then they could enter the camp. All those commands were probably considered part of the permanent law of Moses, although the text does not say so.

Christians and War

Christians are engaged in a great super-cosmic war. Indeed, Jesus said to his disciples, **"Think not that I came to spread peace on the earth. I came not to spread peace, but a sword"** (Matthew 10:34). And near the end of his life, Paul said, **"I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith"** (Second Timothy 4:7). However, our fight is spiritual and our armament is spiritual. For Paul said to his brothers at Ephesus, **"Stand ye therefore having girded your loins with truth, and having put on the breast-plate of righteousness, and having shod your feet in preparation of the good news of peace. Above all having taken up the shield of faith, by which ye will be able to quench all the fiery darts of evil. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God ..."** (Ephesians 6:14-17). Our fight is spiritual, and our major weapon is the word of God.

Nevertheless, a man can serve his country with a physical weapon as a soldier or in some other capacity and still be a Christian. Jesus never taught against war. In fact, some of his parables were about how to fight earthly wars (for example Luke 14:31). When John the immerser was preaching repentance, people came to him with questions about how to live. Here is one example, **"And men who were soldiers also questioned him, saying, And we, what should we do? And he said to them, Do violence to no man, nor accuse falsely, and be content with your wages"** (Luke 3:14). He said nothing against being a soldier.

Indeed, the first Gentile Christian was a Roman Centurion named Cornelius, to whom God sent an agent to tell him how to become a Christian (see Acts 10). And the Bible says nothing about requiring him to stop being a soldier. There are many other examples that show there is nothing wrong with Christians "bearing the sword" for combat with men while serving offices of authority. That assumes, of course, that his service does not involve sinning against God. That is true of our every endeavor, whether with a sword or not.

Part 2:17

DISEASE AND IMPURITY

Most of the laws about disease and other forms of impurity are given in the book of Leviticus. Various skin disorders classified a man unclean. Houses and garments could be classified unclean if there were spreading discolorations in them. After giving laws about those things, the text says, **"This is the law for all manner of a leprous disease, and for a scall, and for a leprous disease of a garment, and for a house, and for a rising, and for a scab, and for a bright spot, to teach when it is unclean, and when it is clean. This is the law of a leprous disease"** (Leviticus 14:54-57).

What we now call leprosy is a very specific disease that affects the skin and peripheral nerves. It is also called Hanson's disease because in 1873 he discovered the bacillus that causes the disease. Thankfully, it can easily be treated with modern medication. However, the longer it is left untreated the more severe and permanent is the damage. It is most prevalent in India, Brazil, and places in southeast Asia such as Indonesia. However, the Hebrew word for leprosy applied to a broad spectrum of diseases, including various diseases of the skin, and diseases in garments and houses. Hence, for the ACV I translated the Hebrew word "leprous disease" not leprosy.

Other laws for impurity besides those of leprous diseases were given. A woman was classified unclean after childbirth. Any discharge of fluid from the body classified a person unclean, including the menstrual discharge. It did not include, however, the normal expulsion of our body waste. And there were laws describing how contact with certain animals made a man unclean. No doubt ancient scoffers considered all those things meaningless superstitions. However, they all make sense now that we know about germs.

Aaron and his sons were responsible for examining men, garments, and houses that were afflicted with a leprous disease. And it was their right to pronounce them clean or unclean. Their duty was primarily to impose requirements that were designed to prevent the spread of disease, and not necessarily to prescribe treatment.

LEPROUS DISEASES

Skin disorders

There are hundreds, perhaps thousands of different kinds of skin diseases. Those described here in the book of Leviticus are only a tiny sample of them. The purpose of those laws could not have been to give comprehensive coverage of the topic. They were apparently given to illustrate the kind of care required to identify patients with skin diseases that needed to be quarantined to protect others. Any patient with a skin disease (leprous disease) was to be examined by a priest. Those who were judged carriers of contagious skin diseases were classified unclean, and were required to be isolated. A few kinds are described, which by inference served as examples.

In the Harding University library I found several modern books about dermatology. In one of them, a thirteen hundred page volume, I found the following summary: "The fundamental pathologic changes in the skin are few and simple. Actually any cell or unit of the skin has but a triad of basic responses to the multiple and diverse factors which cause disease. The three basic responses are:

(1) Functional—impairment of function in the absence of morphologic changes.

(2) Inflammatory—degenerative changes following cellular injury.

(3) Proliferative—increase in the number of cells of a given type, viz., tumors, benign or malignant."[1]

Since the priests were to be concerned with identifying uncleanness (such as contagious skin diseases) they were not to be concerned with the impairment of function. They were to look for morphologic changes, namely, inflammation and proliferation. Regarding morphologic changes the authors of the dermatology book went on to say, "Broadly sketched, the clinician perceives but three fundamental morphologic changes in the skin. He sees a change in *color*, *mass* or *fluid content*" (italics theirs). Those three things were precisely what the priests were to look for as commanded in the law of Moses.

Examination

Several specific skin disorders are described in the law. Below I give a summary of what was said about each of them. First I give the description of the particular skin condition. Then I list the steps the priest was to take to determine whether the man should be pronounced clean or unclean.

- A rising, or a scab, or a bright spot where the hair has turned white and the disease is deeper than the skin,
  1. then pronounce unclean.
  2. If it is not deeper than the skin, and the hair has not turned white then isolate seven days.
  3. If it has not spread then isolate seven more days.
  4. If it is dim and has not spread then pronounce clean.
  5. However, if it spreads pronounce unclean.
- A white rising in the skin and it has turned the hair white and there is quick raw flesh in the rising,
  1. then pronounce unclean; it is an old leprous disease.
  2. Do not isolate temporarily. Being unclean means isolation until found clean.
- A disease covers all of the skin from the head even to the feet, and it all turns white,
  1. then pronounce clean.

1. Donald M. Pillsbury, Walter B. Shelley, and Albert M. Kligman: *Dermatology*, (Philadelphia: Saunders) 1956.

2. However, if there is raw flesh appearing then pronounce unclean.
3. But if the raw flesh turns white then pronounce clean.

- A boil in the skin of it and it is healed, and in the place of the boil there is a white rising, or a bright spot, reddish-white, and is deeper than the skin, and the hair of it has turned white,

1. then pronounce unclean.
2. However, if there are no white hairs, and it is not deeper than the skin, but is dim then isolate for seven days.
3. If it spreads then pronounce unclean.
4. Otherwise pronounce clean.

- A burning by fire in the skin of it, and the quick of the burning becomes a bright spot, reddish-white, or white, and the hair in the bright spot has turned white, and it is deeper than the skin,

1. then pronounce unclean.
2. However, if there is no white hair in it, and it is not deeper than the skin, but is dim then isolate seven days.
3. If it spreads then pronounce unclean.
4. If it does not spread but is dim then pronounce clean.

- A disease upon the head or upon the beard, and it is deeper than the skin, and there is yellow thin hair in it,

1. then pronounce unclean; it is a scall.
2. However, if it is not deeper than the skin, with no black hair in it then isolate for seven days.
3. In the seventh day if it has not spread, with no yellow hair in it, and it is not deeper than the skin then he is to be shaven and isolated seven more days.
4. In the seventh day if it has not spread, and is not deeper than the skin then he is to wash his clothes and be clean.
5. But if it spreads later then pronounce unclean.
6. Otherwise if it has not spread and black hair has grown in it then pronounce clean.

- Bright spots on the skin, if they are dull white then pronounce clean; it was a tetter.
- Simple baldness on the head or forehead then pronounce clean.
- A reddish-white disease in the bald head or the bald forehead, which appeared to be a leprous disease then pronounce unclean.

The main symptoms that required pronouncing a man unclean were (1) if the disease was deeper than the skin with white (or sometimes yellow) hair in it, (2) if there was raw flesh, or (3) if the disease had spread after seven days isolation. One or more of those conditions was mentioned in each case except for the last one; it simply says a reddish-white disease (or the rising of it) in the bald head required pronouncing a man unclean.

Separation

A man with a leprous disease was to be completely separated from other people. Here is the command: **"And the man with a leprous disease in whom the disease is, his clothes shall be torn, and the hair of his head shall go loose, and he shall cover his upper lip, and shall cry, Unclean, unclean. All the days in which the disease is in him he shall be unclean; he is unclean. He shall dwell alone; his dwelling shall be outside the camp"** (Leviticus 13:45-46).

Torn clothes was a general sign of distress and anguish for whatever reason. Having his hair go loose probably meant it should be unkempt and disheveled, which would be in accord with the torn condition of his clothes. What is meant by covering his upper lip is not clear. Perhaps they were to wrap a strip of cloth around the lower half of their face to cover their upper lip. Perhaps it meant covering their face with a cloth like modern masks that are used to filter breathing, except theirs would not cover their nose. Whatever it means it would have been a very noticeable sign of their uncleanness.

They were apparently not incarcerated in any way, so there was a need for them to broadcast their condition. The whole purpose was obviously to keep them from having normal interactions with other persons because their uncleanness was more dangerous. Regarding their isolation, I have no doubt they were adequately supplied with the necessities of life. For the law is filled with commands by God to care for the poor and the needy.

After being healed

If the man had been healed he was to be examined and then subjected to a cleansing ritual. The steps required for that are listed below:

1. The priest was to go forth out of the camp and examine the man.
2. If he was healed the priest was to command to take two living clean birds, and cedar wood, and scarlet, and hyssop for the man.
3. The priest was to command to kill one of the birds in an earthen vessel over running water.
4. The priest was to take the living bird, and the cedar wood, and the scarlet, and the hyssop, and dip them in the blood of the bird that was killed over the running water.
5. The priest was to sprinkle seven times upon the man and pronounce him clean.
6. Then the priest was let the living bird go into the open field.
7. The man was to wash his clothes, and shave off all his hair, and bathe himself in water, and be clean.
8. After that the man was to come into the camp, but dwell outside his tent seven days.
9. On the seventh day, he was to shave all the hair off his head and his beard and his eyebrows, even all his hair.
10. And he was to wash his clothes and bathe his flesh in water, and be clean.

After the ceremony of his cleansing the priest was to make an atoning sacrifice for him. Those steps are listed below:

1. On the eighth day he was to take two he-lambs without blemish, and one ewe-lamb a year old without blemish, and three tenth parts of an ephah of fine flour for a meal offering, mingled with oil, and one log of oil.
2. The priest who cleanses him was to set the man and those things before Jehovah, at the door of the tent of meeting.
3. The priest was to take one of the he-lambs, and offer him for a trespass offering, and the log of oil, and wave them for a wave offering before Jehovah.
4. The priest was to kill the he-lamb in the place where they kill the sin offering and the burnt offering, in the place of the sanctuary.
5. The priest was to take of the blood of the trespass offering, and put it upon the tip of the man's right ear, the thumb of his right hand, and the great toe of his right foot. (That was also done when Aaron and his sons were annointed.)
6. The priest was to take of the log of oil, and pour it into the palm of his own left hand, dip his right finger in the oil that is in his hand, and sprinkle of the oil with his finger seven times before Jehovah.
7. The priest was to take some of the oil in his hand and put it upon the tip of the man's right ear, and upon the thumb of his right hand, and upon the great toe of his right foot, on the blood of the trespass offering.
8. The priest was to take the rest of the oil in his hand and put it upon the head of the man.
9. The priest was to offer the sin offering, and make atonement for the man because of his uncleanness.
10. Afterward the priest was to kill the burnt offering.
11. The priest was to offer the burnt offering and the meal offering upon the altar, making atonement for him to be clean.

Jehovah made provision for a man who was poor and could not afford three lambs. Instead he could bring one lamb, two turtle-doves or young pigeons, and the tenth part of an ephah of fine flour with the oil. Otherwise the procedure was about the same, with the two birds substituting for lambs.

The New Testament tells how Jesus commanded a leper he had healed to depart and undergo that ritual (see Mark 1:40-44). That passage in the New Testament gives one reason for the ritual; namely, for a testimony of his cleansing.

Washing and disease prevention

Regarding all the requirements of washing in the law, washing has always been an excellent way to prevent disease. Therefore, it was emphasized in the law. However, as with many other things, the Jews of Jesus' time were excessive about it. The New Testament says, **"For the Pharisees, and all the Jews, unless they wash their hands carefully, do not eat, holding the tradition of the elders. And coming from the marketplace, they**

do not eat unless they bathe. And there are many other things that they have taken in to retain: washings of cups, and pots, and brazen vessels, and beds" (Mark 7:3-4).

Nevertheless, cleanliness has more commonly been ignored and neglected by people of the world. In fact, until modern times most physicians gave no importance to washing even when examining and treating sick patients. The Bible was over three thousand years ahead of its time in emphasizing washing and general cleanliness to control for disease. Modern science now knows why that is so important, but God always knew. An excellent book about the Bible and modern medicine is *None of These Diseases* by S.I. McMillen.

God also knows why immorality is so harmful. That is why he has always condemned it. However, such condemnation is scoffed at by the unbelieving world. But God knows that immorality is far more deadly to our spiritual health than diseases. For example, when Jesus was criticized for not washing before eating, he said, **"Do ye not yet understand, that everything entering into the mouth goes into the belly, and is cast out into a toilet? But the things coming out of the mouth come forth from the heart, and those things defile the man. For from the heart comes forth evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witnessings, revilings. These are things defiling the man. But to eat with unwashed hands does not defile the man"** (Matthew 15:17-20). His lesson was about defiling our spirit, and not about harm to our physical body.

A leprous disease in a garment

What was called a leprous disease could afflict a garment as well as a man. In the case of a garment it was probably fungi (including molds) that caused the discolorations. Fungi are organisms that feed on organic material, living or dead. And the linen, wool, and leather mentioned here are all organic materials. Tens of thousands of species of fungi have been discovered.

As with leprous diseases in humans the priest was to examine the material, and then check for its growth by examining it again after seven days isolation. If he saw signs it was spreading he was to classify the garment unclean and burn it. That would have ensured the destruction of the fungi. With no sign of growth the garment was to be washed and isolated another seven days. If the disease had not changed its color, whether it had spread or not, it was classified unclean and was to be burned.

However, if the disease became dim after the washing, he was to tear that part out of the garment. If it reappeared elsewhere on it, then he was to burn the garment. Otherwise it was to be washed a second time and pronounced clean. In that way garments could be salvaged if the fungi were successfully removed, although the originally infected part had to be removed and by inference burned.

A leprous disease in a house

The leprous diseases in houses were probably also fungi. The need to empty the house is because some fungi can infect people, especially when inhaled. As with leprous diseases there was a need to check for spreading. Hence, for seven days the house was shut up, after which another examination was made.

If the disease spread they were to remove the infected stones and replace them with fresh ones. They were also to scrape the inside of the house and put on fresh plaster. All of the old materials were to be disposed at an unclean place. That was an effort to save the house. Since they had no powerful chemicals to combat a fungus in those days all they could do was replace the stones and plaster that were infected. If the disease kept spreading, the whole house had to be broken down and discarded at an unclean place. If the house was pronounced clean, then a simple sacrifice involving two birds was required afterward.

The Bible gives this command for those who were exposed to an infected house: **"Moreover he who goes into the house all the while that it is shut up shall be unclean until the evening. And he who lies in the house shall wash his clothes. And he who eats in the house shall wash his clothes"** (Leviticus 14:46-47). Those things were no doubt to help prevent spreading the disease.

Uncleanness from Body Fluids

Specific commands were given about anybody who had **"an issue out of his flesh."** He was declared unclean whether the issue was continuing or stopped. And whoever had any physical contact with him or anything he sat or lay upon was made unclean. The exposed man was required to wash himself and his clothes, and remain unclean until evening. Also any earthen vessel the afflicted man touched was to be broken, and every wooden vessel was to be rinsed in water. There was one exception to what he touched: if the afflicted man first rinsed his hands in water he could touch another man without making him unclean.

After his cleansing he was required to wash himself and his clothes, and remain classified unclean for seven more days. On the eighth day he was to offer a sacrifice of two birds to make atonement for his uncleanness. The same rules applied if a woman's menstrual period was abnormally long or if she had an issue of blood not during her normal period.

During a woman's normal menstrual period she was classified unclean for seven days. And whoever had any physical contact with her or anything she sat or lay upon was made unclean. Whoever touched her was then required to wash himself and his clothes and remain unclean until evening. And any man who lay with her during that time (unaware of her condition) was classified unclean for seven days, and any bed he lay upon was unclean.

After giving those ordinances, Jehovah said to Moses, **"Thus ye shall separate the sons of Israel from their uncleanness, that they not die in their uncleanness when they defile my tabernacle that is in the midst of them. This is the law of him who has an issue, and of him whose seed of copulation goes from him, so that he is unclean thereby, and of her who is sick with her impurity, and of him who has an issue, of the man, and of the woman, and of him who lies with her who is unclean"** (Leviticus 15:31-33).

The Water of Impurity

There was a special command given about uncleanness that involved the ashes of a red heifer. The (high) priest was to take an unblemished red heifer outside the camp for a sin offering, one upon which a yoke never came. She was to be killed there, and he was to sprin-

kle her blood seven times with his finger toward the front of the tent of meeting. Then she was to be totally burned together with some cedar-wood, hyssop, and scarlet. After which the priest was to wash himself and his clothes, come into the camp, and be unclean until the evening. The man who burned her was to do the same. Another man who was clean was to gather the ashes and lay them up outside the camp in a clean place. Afterward he too was to wash and be unclean until evening.

Those ashes were to be used for **"a water for impurity"** for the sons of Israel as well as the strangers in their midst. Apparently it was created by mixing some ashes of the red heifer with water, and it was used to cleanse. Whoever touched the corpse of a man was unclean seven days, and he was required to purify himself by being sprinkled with the water of purification on the third day. Otherwise he would remain unclean, and was to be **"cut off from Israel."**

Touching any part of the corpse of a man or a grave, or even being in or coming in a tent when a man died, made a man unclean. The text also says every vessel without a covering was unclean, which must refer to those inside the tent. All who were unclean that way were to remain so classified seven days. On the third and seventh days they were to use ashes of the red heifer for their cleanliness. Some of the ashes were to be placed with running water in a vessel. Then a clean man was to take hyssop, dip it in the water, and sprinkle it upon everything and everybody that was unclean that way. The ashes in the water may have had some kind of antiseptic effect. On the seventh day, after being sprinkled, the man was to wash himself and his clothes, and be clean at evening. The man who sprinkled the water was also to wash his clothes.

The Jews have created many oral laws and traditions not found in the law of Moses, or anywhere else in the Bible. Some of those involve the red heifer. Jewish tradition says they cannot purify the temple mount in order to build a new temple without the ashes of a perfect red heifer. Hence, there was much excitement by the orthodox Jews and many Christians who believe such things when a red heifer was born in Israel in 2001. The story about that can be found on the internet. It is all so hypocritical. They show no concern for the commands in the Bible about using the ashes of a red heifer on the unclean, but they make much of what the Bible says nothing about; namely, using such ashes for the temple. As they did in Jesus' time, they make their traditions more important than the commands of God.

Cleanliness for the Army

There are two laws that specifically relate to cleanliness for their armies. The first one concerned uncleanness inside the camp. The law commanded whoever became unclean accidentally during the night to leave the (army) camp. Then at evening he was to bathe himself and return. The second law commanded them to carry a tool to bury their body waste. They were not to leave it exposed on the ground like animals. The text says, **"For Jehovah thy God walks in the midst of thy camp, to deliver thee, and to give up thine enemies before thee. Therefore thy camp shall be holy, that he may not see an unclean thing in thee, and turn away from thee"** (Deuteronomy 23:14).

Purification After Childbirth

One of the most mysterious laws is about childbirth.The law says, **"If a woman conceives seed, and bears a man-child, then she shall be unclean seven days, as in the days of the impurity of her sickness she shall be unclean. And in the eighth day the flesh of his foreskin shall be circumcised. And she shall continue in the blood of *her* purifying thirty-three days. She shall touch no hallowed thing, nor come into the sanctuary, until the days of her purifying be fulfilled. But if she bears a maid-child, then she shall be unclean two weeks, as in her impurity, and she shall continue in the blood of *her* purifying sixty-six days"** (Leviticus 12:1-5). After her purifying she was to bring a lamb and two birds for a sacrificial offering. She could omit the lamb if she could not afford it.

I am told a woman continues to discharge small amounts of the residue of birth for several weeks after delivery. The total time a mother was considered unclean was forty days after the delivery of a boy, and eighty days after a girl. Perhaps the reason she was considered unclean for at least forty days was to give ample time for her uterus to recover. Perhaps also, being classified unclean, it would have prevented her from assuming all her normal duties. And in that way would have given her more time to recover from the pregnancy. It may also have prevented her from becoming with child too soon, because her husband would have been considered unclean each time he had bedded with her during the time of her uncleanness. In other words, for her to be classified unclean may have meant she was not to be treated as normal, rather than to consider her actually defiled or literally unclean. Some versions use the expression "ceremonially unclean" for this passage and others in the Bible. However, they have added that word, for the original text of the Bible never uses a word meaning "ceremonial" or "ceremonially." It is just another example of how they pervert translation by adding disguised commentary.

Why a mother was considered unclean twice as long after the birth of a girl is not explained, and that seems to be the greatest mystery about this law. There may be some unknown physiological or chemical difference between a male and a female fetus in its effect on the mother. There are some who attempt to explain the difference in terms of the sin of Eve. My son suggested the possibility that the difference was because a girl needs to become more identified with her mother. Perhaps baby girls need a longer time to bond more strongly with their mothers as well as identify with them. Nevertheless, whether any of that was related to the command or not, there are important natural differences between males and females that should be fostered early and maintained for healthy growth and development.

Uncleanness with Animals

The law about touching unclean animals is not clear. In one place it says touching them made a man unclean, and right after that it says touching their carcass made a man unclean until evening. Then it says whoever carried their carcass was to wash his clothes and be unclean until evening. Perhaps there were degrees of uncleanness. Merely touching an unclean animal may have caused temporary uncleanness that perhaps could have been corrected by washing where the contact was made. Touching the carcass of one required a

longer period of uncleanness. While carrying one not only required a longer period of uncleanness but also a more thorough cleansing. Nevertheless, they were still to offer a trespass offering whenever they became unclean that way (see Leviticus 5:2-6).

A related law concerns eating **"that which dies of itself, or that which is torn of beasts"** (Leviticus 17:15). They were commanded against eating any such flesh. Doing so caused uncleanness, and required the man to wash himself and his clothes, and be unclean until evening. I say more about that in the topic about diet in Part 2:12.

More laws were given about how to treat vessels and other objects that were contaminated by an unclean animal. The text also says, **"Nevertheless a fountain or a pit in which is a gathering of water shall be clean, but that which touches their carcass shall be unclean. And if *any* of their carcass falls upon any sowing seed which is to be sown, it is clean. But if water is put upon the seed, and *any* of their carcass falls in it, it is unclean to you"** (Leviticus 11:32-38).

We can see the wisdom in all of those laws now that we know about germs. Those laws were warnings to discourage them from being contaminated by the uncleanness of animals. Only the flesh of the safer animals that were properly killed and butchered was acceptable for them to handle and eat. Our modern laws about things that can be sold for food require the same thing. Yet Jehovah gave his people those laws three and a half thousand years ago.

A Hanged Man

If a man was hanged they were to bury the man the same day. The law says, **"And if a man has committed a sin worthy of death, and he be put to death, and thou hang him on a tree, his body shall not remain all night upon the tree, but thou shall surely bury him the same day, for he who is hanged is accursed of God, that thou not defile thy land which Jehovah thy God gives thee for an inheritance"** (Deuteronomy 21:22-23).

Moses gave no reason other than to say such a body was accursed of God, and it would defile their land. Such sights are certainly repugnant, but prolonged exposure tends to desensitize. And no doubt God did not want his people to become desensitized to such horrible things. That is another growing evil in this adulterous generation of Americans. They are portraying murders and other horrible crimes with greater and more graphic detail in the entertainment and communication media. Such things were against the law when most Americans were Christians. The effect has been to desensitize the repugnance of such things, and make them even more tempting to create by those inclined to evil. Thus, murders and other horrible crimes continue to multiply.

Part 2:18

THINGS BELONGING TO OTHERS

COVETING

The last of the ten commandments says, **"Thou shall not covet thy neighbor's house. Thou shall not covet thy neighbor's wife, nor his man-servant, nor his maid-servant, nor his ox, nor his donkey, nor anything that is thy neighbor's."** This is the one commandment of the ten that deals with the heart of a man, for coveting is not an overt act but an attitude. To covet is to want what belongs to another. The command does not forbid wanting the same kind of thing, but wanting what he actually owns. Coveting is what leads to theft. It is not enough to not steal, but we should not even desire what belongs to another man. When Jesus gave what we call his sermon on the mount, he focused upon attitude. For example, he extended the command against adultery to forbid even looking at a woman to crave her. As I have said before, what is really needed for righteousness is a right spirit within a man. And this last of the ten commandments is one that forbids a wrong attitude. And by way of principle, we should not harbor any evil thought, for evil thoughts are what spawn evil deeds. Hearken carefully to this proverb: **"Keep thy heart with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life"** (Proverbs 4:23).

THINGS LOST

Jehovah commanded his people to help each other in many ways. One command was about lost beasts and garments. They were to take lost things to their owners. If the owner was distant (and probably unknown) they were to keep the item until the owner sought for it.

When we find something lost by someone else, we should return the item to them. If we do not know who lost it, then the proper thing to do in America is take it to the appropriate authorities to hold until the owner seeks for it. For example, something found in a Wal-Mart store should be taken to a central desk there where people know lost things are kept. I once had my hat recovered that way when I left the store without it. Something found on the street should be taken to a police station, because people know that is where lost things are kept.

Concealing lost items is the same as theft. There are a few countries in the world where exposed lost items are as safe as in a bank. My son was stationed in Japan while he was in the U.S. Navy. And he said a wallet dropped on a sidewalk there would be ignored by everybody; nobody would take it. Apparently if it were left there very long the police would store it or contact the owner.

I am ashamed to say, such respect for private property is now much less common in pagan America. When I was a child, and this was still a country of Christians, it was common for doors to be left unlocked, and keys were kept unattended in cars. I remember when motorcycles and tractors did not even have keys, and nobody ever locked their bicycles. Now in many places in America thieves are everywhere because there is much less fear of God, and

crime pays. However, there are other countries that are worse, much worse. You can generally get a good idea what kind of place you are in by looking at how many bars are on the doors and windows of their buildings. Before Americans became pagan, bars on doors and windows were very rare, and normally limited to places such as banks.

HELPING

The sons of Israel were also commanded to help the owner of a donkey that had fallen under his burden. That is another command to be a good neighbor, and help him in such a time of need. Obviously that and the law about lost beasts and garments were intended to be generalized to other things. They were examples of the principle Jesus taught, which we call the golden rule: **"And as ye desire that men would do to you, do ye also to them likewise"** (Luke 6:31).

There are countless other kinds of situations we might face, especially in these modern times, where a man could use our help. However, one of the evil consequences of the growing lawlessness in America is the increasing dangers involved in helping others, especially strangers. Great caution and prudent judgment are now required to determine whether every need we see warrants our aid. Picking up hitchhikers now is exceedingly dangerous, and not recommended except in extraordinary circumstances. God does not expect us to risk our lives to help in situations that do not need immediate assistance to save life and property. Civil and professional services are now readily available to help travelers who have needs. Each situation must be judged according to the apparent need, its urgency, the risks involved, and the availability of other resources. The story of the good Samaritan is one example where there was a desperate need for immediate assistance. And although there was risk involved, no other resources appeared to be available. Therefore, the Samaritan came to the man's aid and helped him as he would have his own blood brother (see Luke 10:30-37).

Jehovah even commanded them to apply those laws to their enemies. He said, **"If thou meet thine enemy's ox or his donkey going astray, thou shall surely bring it back to him again. If thou see the donkey of him who hates thee lying under his burden, thou shall refrain leaving him. Thou shall surely release *it* with him"** (Exodus 23:4-5). I think it is obvious Jehovah was not talking about aiding enemies in wartime. And I also believe he was not talking about aiding wicked men, because they are at war with society. I believe this command is like the one Jesus gave to bless our enemies, because it is not uncommon to have enemies that are otherwise ordinary law abiding men. And just as Jesus did, Jehovah commanded the sons of Israel to be kind even to men who were their adversaries or who hated them.

For the subject of theft, see Part 2:20 which is about honesty.

Part 2:19

INTERACTIONS WITH GOODS

LOANS

As in every society men borrow from each other, and the law of Moses gave a few commands about that. However, the laws about lending are not all clear. Most of those commands were to prevent lenders from abusing the poor and needy, those who were forced to borrow.

Interest

The law did not allow the sons of Israel to charge each other interest or increase on loans. They could only charge interest on loans to foreigners: **"Thou shall not lend upon interest to thy brother: interest of money, interest of food, interest of anything that is lent upon interest. To a foreigner thou may lend upon interest, but to thy brother thou shall not lend upon interest, that Jehovah thy God may bless thee in all that thou put thy hand to, in the land where thou go in to possess it"** (Deuteronomy 23:19-20).

There are several passages in the Old Testament that condemn collecting interest. Here is one from the Psalms: **"Jehovah, who shall sojourn in thy tabernacle? Who shall dwell in thy holy hill? He who walks uprightly, and works righteousness, and speaks truth in his heart, he who does no slander with his tongue, nor does evil to his friend, nor takes up a reproach against his neighbor, in whose eyes a reprobate is despised, but who honors those who fear Jehovah, he that swears to his own hurt, and changes not, he who puts not his money out to interest, nor takes a bribe against the innocent. He who does these things shall never be moved"** (Psalm 15). As the Psalm above indicates, charging interest on a loan to a fellow Israelite was considered an act of unrighteousness. Remember however, they were allowed to charge interest on loans to foreigners. Of course, that would not have included the proselytes among them.

Pledges

Pledges were things used to guarantee the loan, and were held in possession by the lender until the loan was repaid. It is the same practice used these days by pawn shops, where items are taken and exchanged for a loan of money. However, there is no record in the Bible of businesses like pawn shops. There is not even the mention of financial banks in the Old Testament. Loans were transacted on a personal basis.

Since lenders were not allowed to charge interest, then the loan was like doing the borrower a favor. The pledge was to help ensure that the lender did not suffer loss if the loan was not repaid. However, they were no doubt expected to loan money equal to the value of the pledge (or perhaps more if they were generous), because another passage about money says, **"... ye shall not wrong each other, but thou shall fear thy God, for I am Jehovah your God"** (Leviticus 25:14). The one benefit lenders had was that they were probably allowed to use the pledge while they had it.

Restrictions to pledges

Jehovah said, **"If thou at all take thy neighbor's garment to pledge, thou shall restore it to him before the sun goes down, that is his only covering. It is his garment for his skin. How shall he sleep? And it shall come to pass, when he cries to me, that I will hear, for I am gracious"** (Exodus 22:26-27). That garment was probably an outer garment, perhaps like a fleece that was also used as a covering for the cold nights. Taking such a garment for a pledge suggests the borrower was poor. However, there is only one direct command about taking a pledge from a poor person. It says they were not to **"take the widow's raiment to pledge ..."** (Deuteronomy 24:17).

Jehovah also said, **"No man shall take the mill or the upper millstone to pledge, for he takes life to pledge"** (Deuteronomy 24:6). A mill and its upper millstone were essential to make flour for baking. And since bread was apparently their main food, especially for those of the lower financial classes, that would be depriving them of an important necessity. Jehovah did not want them to be so cruel as to deprive a man, who was already in need, of something that essential. It would be equivalent to taking an American's car in pledge, because most have no other means of transportation.

Another command says, **"When thou do lend thy neighbor any manner of loan, thou shall not go into his house to fetch his pledge. Thou shall stand outside, and the man to whom thou lend shall bring forth the pledge outside to thee"** (Deuteronomy 24:10-11). That is yet another law commanding them to show consideration to a borrower. They were not allowed to enter his private house uninvited. We take things like that for granted in America because our Christian forefathers gave us so many rights. Notice however, the borrower was commanded to bring forth his pledge. God also respects the rights of lenders, and requiring a pledge is one of their rights.

Lending to the Poor

The law said, **"If there be with thee a poor man, one of thy brothers, within any of thy gates in thy land which Jehovah thy God gives thee, thou shall not harden thy heart, nor shut thy hand from thy poor brother, but thou shall surely open thy hand to him, and shall surely lend him sufficient for his need which he wants. Beware that there not be a base thought in thy heart, saying, The seventh year, the year of release, is at hand, and thine eye be evil against thy poor brother, and thou give him nothing, and he cry to Jehovah against thee, and it be sin to thee. Thou shall surely give him, and thy heart shall not be grieved when thou give to him, because for this thing Jehovah thy God will bless thee in all thy work, and in all that thou put thy hand to. For the poor will never cease out of the land. Therefore I command thee, saying, Thou shall surely open thy hand to thy brother, to thy needy, and to thy poor, in thy land"** (Deuteronomy 15:7-11).

There will always be some who face difficult times financially. Moses commanded the sons of Israel to help those with such needs. Notice he said they were to lend such a man sufficient for his need. It was to be a loan and not a gift. Gifts to the poor were voluntary, loans to them were required. However, what to loan, how to loan, and how much to loan were ap-

parently left to the discretion of the lender. Nevertheless, it was to be **"sufficient for his need which he wants."** Yet I am sure Moses was not telling them to help lazy irresponsible men. For Paul said, **"… if any man will not work, neither let him eat"** (Second Thessalonians 3:10). And the command to lend was not given to any individual. There were no doubt times when it would have been more expedient for several men to provide for a poor man's need. I discuss the year of release farther on.

They were no commands against taking pledges from the poor. Nevertheless, there is a passage in the law that says they were not to act as creditors to them: **"If thou lend money to any of my people with thee who is poor, thou shall not be to him as a creditor, neither shall ye lay upon him interest"** (Exodus 22:25). That command suggests they were not allowed to take pledges from the poor if it would add to their burdens. Remember what God said about keeping a borrowers garment overnight: **"And it shall come to pass, when he cries to me, that I will hear, for I am gracious"** (Exodus 22:26-27).

There is a passage in the book of Nehemiah that tells how some of the Jews who returned after their Babylonian exile had taken advantage of the poor who needed to borrow from them. It says, "**Then there arose a great cry of the people and of their wives against their brothers the Jews. For there were who said, We, our sons and our daughters, are many. Let us get grain that we may eat and live. There were some also who said, We are mortgaging our fields, and our vineyards, and our houses. Let us get grain because of the dearth. There were also who said, We have borrowed money for the king's tribute *upon* our fields and our vineyards. Yet now our flesh is as the flesh of our brothers, our sons as their sons. And, lo, we bring into bondage our sons and our daughters to be servants, and some of our daughters are brought into bondage *already*. Neither is it in our power to help it, for other men have our fields and our vineyards.**

"And I [Nehemiah] **was very angry when I heard their cry and these words. Then I consulted with myself, and contended with the ranking men and the rulers, and said to them, Ye exact usury, everyone of his brother. And I held a great assembly against them. And I said to them, According to our ability we have redeemed our brothers the Jews, who were sold to the nations, and would ye even sell your brothers, and should they be sold to us? Then they were silent, and found not a word. Also I said, The thing that ye do is not good. Ought ye not to walk in the fear of our God, because of the reproach of the nations our enemies? And I likewise, my brothers and my servants, lend them money and grain. I pray you, let us leave off this usury. Restore, I pray you, to them, even this day, their fields, their vineyards, their oliveyards, and their houses, also the hundredth part of the money, and of the grain, the new wine, and the oil, that ye exact of them. Then they said, We will restore them, and will require nothing of them, so will we do, even as thou say. Then I called the priests, and took an oath from them that they would do according to this promise"** (Nehemiah 5:1-12).

Notice how those lenders had taken possession of their fields, vineyards, oliveyards, and houses. Those things were apparently the pledges that the poor Jews used to borrow the money they needed for food (because of the dearth), and to pay the king's tribute. Those

pledges were the very things they needed to help them survive. Therefore, in cases such as that it is obvious God would not want the lenders to take those pledges.

Moreover, those lenders were charging interest, which was clearly against the law of Moses. The interest they exacted was "**the hundredth part,"** which was probably determined monthly because the Israelites used a lunar calendar. If the hundredth part was monthly it would have resulted in a high twelve percent annual rate. Nevertheless, whatever was the case about the rate of interest, Nehemiah was justifiably angry with the prosperous Jews who were exacting usury that way. And he demanded they return the borrowers' property and the interest payments they had collected. Those selfish lenders did not argue or resist because they knew they were doing wrong.

Responsibility for Goods

The law said, **"If a man shall deliver to his neighbor money or stuff to keep, and it be stolen out of the man's house, if the thief be found, he shall pay double. If the thief is not found, then the master of the house shall come near to God, *to see* whether he has not put his hand to his neighbor's goods. For every matter of trespass, whether it be for ox, for donkey, for sheep, for raiment, *or* for any manner of lost thing, of which a man says, This is it, the case of both parties shall come before God. He whom God shall condemn shall pay double to his neighbor"** (Exodus 22:7-9).

There are some things difficult to interpret in that passage. Men sometimes deliver money or material to their neighbors for deposit or for safekeeping. However, the reason for delivery was apparently irrelevant for this law. What is meant by the master of the house coming near to God is not clear. It probably means coming to the priests for judgment. But how they would decide is not clear either, because the scripture says **"He whom God shall condemn ... ."** Perhaps because the priests were God's representatives, whomever they condemned in the case was considered a condemnation from God. On the other hand the high priest may have used the Urim as a way to inquire of God, as in this example about Joshua: **"And he** [Joshua] **shall stand before Eleazar the priest, who shall inquire for him by the judgment of the Urim before Jehovah"** (Numbers 27:21). However, that method of inquiry was probably not commonly used, especially for mundane disputes.

The law says if the thief was found he was to pay double. The major problem seems to have been if the thief was not exposed. In that case both parties were to come before God. And if God condemned the neighbor who received the items, then he was to pay double to the neighbor who delivered them to him. At least that seems to be the meaning of the words. The man condemned could have been guilty of negligence. He could also have stolen or sold them, which must be the meaning of **"put his hand to his neighbor's goods**." The penalty in this case for things not recovered was double. The "double" in this law no doubt means providing twice the value of what was missing.

The next part of that law is about animals, and it says, **"If a man delivers to his neighbor a donkey, or an ox, or a sheep, or any beast, to keep, and it dies, or be hurt, or driven away, no man seeing it, the oath of Jehovah shall be between them both, whether he**

has not put his hand to his neighbor's goods. And the owner of it shall accept it, and he shall not make restitution. But if it is stolen from him, he shall make restitution to the owner of it. If it is torn in pieces, let him bring it for evidence. He shall not make good that which was torn" (Exodus 22:10-13).

If harm or loss occurred to an animal that was delivered to a neighbor, then the oath of Jehovah was to be between them both. What that must mean is that the neighbor responsible for the animal was to swear before God, in the presence of the owner, that he was not guilty of any wrongdoing. When that was done he would not be required to make restitution. However, making an oath before God was considered a very serious matter. And any man who swore falsely would face the wrath of God. The man would also be free from making restitution if he brought evidence the animal had been killed by predators.

All of these laws were intended to protect the innocent and punish the guilty. Notice in every case of wrongdoing about possessions, when the man at fault was identified he was required to recompense the victim. That rarely happens in our court system, except when lawyers are used to sue large companies. And even then the company is sued and not the guilty men responsible. Justice is no longer the goal of our legal system since America became pagan.

"And if a man borrows anything of his neighbor, and it be hurt, or die, the owner of it not being with it, he shall surely make restitution. If the owner of it is with it, he shall not make it good. If it be a hired thing, it came for its hire" (Exodus 22:15). This law is different from the one about delivering things to a neighbor. In this case it involves borrowing. And the obvious fair thing is for a borrower to either return the item as it was, or recompense the owner fully. The exception for that was if the owner was with it. That meant the owner took full responsibility for the item while he was with it, even if another man was using it. The statement about a hired thing is not easy to interpret. The NIV says, "the money paid for the hire covers the loss," which is an interpretation not a translation. I could just as well express it, "the cost of the hire includes any loss." Hence, total loss would mean full restitution plus payment for its hire. When interpretations are made they should be presented as such, and not disguised as translations. There are many things about many modern versions that make them untrustworthy.

I prefer the second possibility stated above. For to obtain the use of something by hire should not exempt a man from responsibility for it. In modern times insurance policies sometimes cover such things, but the Bible says nothing about insurance. Before insurance protection a man's relatives, friends, and neighbors would share their resources to help him recover from a major loss. In such situations no doubt judgments were made about how deserving the man was, and how much he needed. But the modern world has become more impersonal. Hence the creation of insurance companies. However, insurance policies can be unfair, for they sometimes protect the careless at the expense of the careful. Yet in today's world insurance protection is a necessity for most people, and required by law for some things. Some policies adjust their coverage to account for who is responsible for the

loss and to what degree. The goal of all our interactions should be justice, with mercy as a possible option depending upon circumstances.

The seventh-year Release

The year of release was a provision to give relief to debtors. The law says, **"At the end of every seven years thou shall make a release. And this is the manner of the release: Every creditor shall release that which he has lent to his neighbor. He shall not exact it from his neighbor and his brother, because Jehovah's release has been proclaimed. From a foreigner thou may exact it, but whatever of thine is with thy brother, thy hand shall release"** (Deuteronomy 15:1-3).

What that law means is controversial. Hence, a variety of interpretations have been suggested. Some believe that law meant all debts for the sons of Israel were cancelled. However, I believe it simply meant no payments were to be exacted that year, and not that lenders would lose everything they lent. In other words, the debt remained, but there were no payments to make the year of release. The year of release was also most likely the sabbath year of the land when they were not allowed to cultivate crops or harvest them commercially. Anyone who needed food could take what he needed for himself and his family from whatever grew on the lands. That was a year of generosity.

Moses warned the sons of Israel not to consider the year of release when a poor man sought a loan. He commanded they give the man **"sufficient for his need which he wants"** (Deuteronomy 15:8). Remember, that probably meant for his necessities and not for whatever he might desire.

The Sale of Land and Houses

Return all land

"In this year of jubilee ye shall return every man to his possession. And if thou sell anything to thy neighbor, or buy of thy neighbor's hand, ye shall not wrong each other. According to the number of years after the jubilee thou shall buy of thy neighbor, *and* according to the number of years of the crops he shall sell to thee. According to the multitude of the years thou shall increase the price of it, and according to the fewness of the years thou shall diminish the price of it, for the number of the crops he sells to thee. And ye shall not wrong each other, but thou shall fear thy God, for I am Jehovah your God" (Leviticus 25:13-17).

The first two things said in that passage are an indication of Jehovah's will for them to show mercy and justice to each other. For mercy a man was to have his possession returned to him, and for justice they were not to wrong each other in their trade dealings. The return to every man's possession did not include everything, only their land, and their houses that were not in walled cities. That passage refers to their land, and it indicates they were not really selling but leasing it. What was sold were the crops harvested each year. For when a man "purchased" land, the crops he harvested from it were not to be returned, only the land itself. Therefore, what was actually sold were the potential crops and not the

land. And since their lands were to be returned on jubilee, the price of their sale was contingent upon the number of years before jubilee. Indeed, that adjustment in the price was part of what was commanded. And Jehovah gave the command, **"ye shall not wrong each other"** twice in that passage, once at the beginning and once at the ending.

God as our landlord

"And the land shall not be sold in perpetuity, for the land is mine. For ye are strangers and sojourners with me" (Leviticus 25:23). What that passage says is that when families were given their portion of land in Israel, it belonged to that family permanently. They could lease it until jubilee, but it was always to be returned to them. Notice Jehovah said the land was his, but they were foreigners with him. God resides in heaven not in this world. He has made visits here as he did from the beginning with Adam in the garden of Eden. He had visited Abraham on occasion, and he accompanied the sons of Israel in the wilderness. But God is always a stranger and sojourner to this world. Even Jesus said to the Jews, **"Ye are from below, I am from above. Ye are of this world, I am not of this world"** (John 8:23).

God is what we call an absentee landlord. The earth belongs to him, but he does not live here. Jehovah chose the sons of Israel to be his own people separate from the world population. Hence, they were to be foreigners to the world. However, too often they joined the sinfulness of the world, and proved themselves unworthy of him. God's people, who are separated from the world, are now the disciples of his Son Jesus Christ. All genuine members of his church become a part of God's kingdom, which makes them foreigners to the world.

Redeeming land

There are always circumstances when some men must sell their property, and God made provisions for that in their laws. One of which says, **"And in all the land of your possession ye shall grant a redemption for the land. If thy brother becomes poor, and sells some of his possession, then his kinsman who is next to him shall come, and shall redeem that which his brother has sold. And if a man has no one to redeem it, and he becomes rich and finds sufficient to redeem it, then let him reckon the years of the sale of it, and restore the excess to the man to whom he sold it, and he shall return to his possession. But if he is not able to get it back for himself, then that which he has sold shall remain in the hand of him who has bought it until the year of jubilee. And in the jubilee it shall go out, and he shall return to his possession"** (Leviticus 25:24-28).

Not only were all the sons of Israel to take back ownership of their lands in the jubilee, but any one of them could at any time redeem his property. He or a kinsman of his could pay the redemption cost, which would depend upon how many years it had been sold. That cost was no doubt also to include the value of whatever crops had been cultivated but not yet harvested. That provision was not commanded directly. Nevertheless, Jehovah had

earlier said, **"ye shall not wrong each other."** And it would certainly have been wrong to take the crops from a man who had worked for it.

Since the time between jubilees was to be fifty years, that would have been the maximum time a man could have sold his land. Of course, fifty years is almost a lifetime. So if that law had been obeyed, even when the owner of the land died while it was sold it would still have passed to his heirs at jubilee.

Redeeming houses

"And if a man sells a dwelling-house in a walled city, then he may redeem it within a whole year after it is sold. For a full year he shall have the right of redemption. And if it be not redeemed within the space of a full year, then the house that is in the walled city shall be made sure in perpetuity to him who bought it, throughout his generations. It shall not go out in the jubilee. But the houses of the villages which have no wall round about them shall be reckoned with the fields of the country. They may be redeemed, and they shall go out in the jubilee" (Leviticus 25:29-31).

Why there was a difference in the right of redemption for houses in a walled city and those of the villages is not clear. Walls add security to anything, including cities. Therefore, villages that could not afford walls were less secure, and were more vulnerable to things such as attacks by marauders. By adding a wall its citizens would have gained more security, but they would have lost the greater rights to redeem their houses. Perhaps Jehovah made that law to compensate the citizens of the humble villages for their reduced security. For God is especially compassionate toward the weak and lowly.

Christians and Loans

The world has changed greatly in the 3500 years since Moses gave these laws of God. Moreover, Christians are not bound by the law of Moses. Therefore, it should not be supposed that a Christian is forbidden to require interest on a loan to another Christian. God has given us much freedom to decide for ourselves because circumstances can vary so much. For example, it would be wrong to expect a Christian banker to provide interest free loans to every Christian. Of course, there are no doubt other times when providing an interest free loan might be a good thing. As Paul said, **"All things are lawful for me, but not all things are expedient"** (First Corinthians 6:12). We have liberty to decide such things, and let no man condemn you for using your own discretion.

Part 2:20

HONESTY

THEFT

The eighth of the ten commandments says, **"Thou shall not steal."** Other laws of Moses give details about just compensation for theft. I know of no nation on earth that does not condemn blatant theft, at least among its own citizens. Respect for ownership is one of the fundamentals of civilization. There were severe penalties in the law of Moses for theft. One law says, **"If a man shall steal an ox, or a sheep, and kill it, or sell it, he shall pay five oxen for an ox, and four sheep for a sheep"** (Exodus 22:1). The larger amount for the ox may have been because it was a working animal. An equivalent law in America would require a man who wrecked or otherwise disposed of a car he stole to repay five cars of equivalent value. A law like that strictly enforced would virtually eliminate car theft. The law goes on the say, **"If the theft is found in his hand alive, whether it be ox, or donkey, or sheep, he shall pay double"** (Exodus 22:4). That no doubt means if the animals were unharmed. Double is still a large penalty, especially if it is something of high value such as a car.

The law also says, **"*A thief* shall make restitution. If he has nothing, then he shall be sold for his theft"** (Exodus 22:3). What that implies is the thief was to be subjected to forced labor until he paid the penalty. That could also be applied in modern times. Part of a man's wages could be taken until his debt was paid. And if he could not or would not work voluntarily some kind of forced labor could be imposed. There are many things in the land that could be done by forced labor to pay for such penalties. All of that assumes improving our laws to allow more justice.

One other thing that was mentioned in Exodus about theft was if the thief was killed in the act. The law said if he attempted robbery at night he could be killed in the act. However, there would be blood guiltiness if he were killed in the daytime. In other words it would be murder. Allowing the thief to be killed if he robbed at night was probably because of the greater danger he posed. Generalizing from that law I am convinced a robber should be executed if he used any violence against a person or any threat of violence in his crime, such as using a knife or a gun. Indeed, any man who threatens the life of an innocent man should be punished with the death penalty. Men who race away from the police in their vehicles should definitely be given the death penalty. For they threaten the lives of many people. There are so many things that could be done to restore peace and order to this country.

Our American laws are now very unjust. Criminals are not required to make any kind of compensation for what they stole or the harm they may have done. The only penalties ever given are "probation," "therapy," "community service," or perhaps some time in jail. When that time is over their crooked lawyers say the criminal had "paid his debt to society," which is utter nonsense. Their debt is to the victims of their crimes, and that is very rarely if ever

paid. In many cases what was stolen is never recovered. And sometimes what the thief stole amounts to hundreds of thousands of dollars for each year he spends in jail.

There is another law about theft where the penalty was only twenty percent of the value of what was stolen. The law says, **"If a soul sins, and commits a trespass against Jehovah, and deals falsely with his neighbor in a matter of deposit, or of bargain, or of robbery, or have oppressed his neighbor, or has found that which was lost, and deal falsely by it, and swears to a lie, in any of all these things that a man does, sinning by it, then it shall be, if he has sinned, and is guilty, that he shall restore that which he took by robbery, or the thing which he has gotten by oppression, or the deposit which was committed to him, or the lost thing which he found, or anything about which he has sworn falsely, he shall even restore it in full, and shall add the fifth part more to it. He shall give it to him to whom it pertains, in the day of his being found guilty"** (Leviticus 6:1-5). The guilty man was also required to make some animal sacrifices.

Why the penalty in that law is so much less is not clear. Of course, the thief was also to restore what he stole in full. The difference in this case versus the penalty of double may be if the thief had voluntarily confessed and returned what he stole unharmed. The double penalty may have been if he was discovered before confessing. There is always more work involved when crimes of theft must be investigated and solved. Therefore, it is just to penalize the thief more.

As with every law of righteousness the command against theft should be generalized. For there are many legal ways to rob a man of what belongs to him. Excessive usury is one example. It was formerly called loan-sharking, and was condemned. But it is now commonly done with things such as credit cards. For example, when the Federal Reserve rate was about one percent, credit card rates were about ten percent or higher. And the lowest income families are hurt the most by such charges, for they have the hardest time avoiding them. Another example of stealing in principle is to make excessive charges for goods and services, especially when people have little or no other choice. If farmers would unite like some other groups, they could set prices (like some other groups) and soon own the country.

The top executives of some companies are also guilty of stealing in principle, because of the enormous amounts of money they pay themselves. However, the worst offenders against the principle of stealing are probably members of the entertainment business. It is common for many of them to be paid tens of millions of dollars per year. Some people have even become billionaires doing nothing but entertaining. Years ago when I was a young man I read a book about wealth. The author said a man could never become rich on a salary. The entertainment industry made that rule obsolete. Dear reader, because something is legal does not make it right. Money does not grow on trees. The exorbitant salaries of those people comes from the pockets of laborers. And in my judgment, exorbitant salaries violate in principle the command not to steal.

Several centuries ago in England they had maximum wage laws. Those are very much needed these days with so much abuse. Such laws are necessary when men will not voluntarily do right. And this generation needs something to control such runaway greed. For the

polarization of wealth is growing in this country that had for so long a great middle class. However, there is so much crookedness in government that such controls will never be created until we have enough honest rulers. And that will not happen until our citizens return to righteousness. Regarding lawsuits, true justice always demands *proper* recompense for everything involved. And these huge modern awards now given in many lawsuits are almost always legalized robbery.

JUST MEASURES

One area where justice seems to be strictly enforced in America is with measurements in business transactions. For example, gasoline pumps are regulated and inspected by our government to ensure the gallons measured are accurate. There are laws against altering any weight or measuring scale. And there are laws requiring proper labeling of the quantity of goods. The law of Moses says, **"Thou shall not have in thy bag diverse weights, a great and a small. Thou shall not have in thy house diverse measures, a great and a small. A perfect and just weight thou shall have, a perfect and just measure thou shall have, that thy days may be long in the land which Jehovah thy God gives thee. For all who do such things, *even* all who do unrighteously, are an abomination to Jehovah thy God"** (Deuteronomy 25:13-16).

LANDMARKS

Another law promoting honesty forbad altering landmarks. The law says, **"Thou shall not remove thy neighbor's landmark, which they of old time have set, in thine inheritance which thou shall inherit, in the land that Jehovah thy God gives thee to possess it"** (Deuteronomy 19:14). Removing landmarks is not common in highly developed countries because careful records are kept about exact locations. However, it was no doubt more difficult to control in the ancient world, especially in the rural areas. As with many other laws no specific penalty was assigned for violations.

BRIBERY

The law says, **"And thou shall take no bribe, for a bribe blinds those who have sight, and perverts the words of the righteous"** (Exodus 23:8). Bribery is very commonly practiced throughout the world. Some countries are worse than others. Generally those countries where the Bible has the greatest influence are the least offenders. By its very definition bribery is illegal. Yet in many places bribery is considered a legitimate way to get what you want, especially from government officials. It is a symptom of the lawlessness of a society. And it has greatly increased in America since it became pagan. For example, the system of lobbying in government has become primarily a disguised method of bribery.

God commanded the sons of Israel against bribery, and he is still against it. Therefore, the growing practice of bribery is just another burden added upon righteous souls. For there are many places and many circumstances where the only way to have something done is with a bribe. Hence, they present walls to the righteous. They also present temptations to the righteous. The Bible mentions how a Roman governor hoped the apostle Paul would bribe

him to be released from custody: **"And after some days, Felix having arrived with Drusilla, his wife being Jewish, he summoned Paul, and heard him about the faith in Christ. ... He also hoped simultaneously that money would be given him by Paul so that he might free him. And so, summoning him more frequently, he conversed with him"** (Acts 24:24-26). Paul never bribed anybody no matter how dire were his circumstances. Nevertheless, some Christian missionaries pay bribes, and they pacify their consciences with many excuses.

Even though the practice is growing, responsible educated men all condemn it (at least publicly) as a corrupting element. It is one of the things keeping Russia and many other countries poor. In the above scripture God said **"a bribe blinds those who have sight."** Those are, of course, figurative words. A bribe blinds men to what is right and just, and it encourages the darkness of lawlessness. Organized criminals love bribery, for bribery and extortion often go together.

God also said a bribe **"perverts the words of the righteous."** One way that bribes pervert the words of the righteous is what they do to laws and rules. Laws and rules are words intended to promote justice and righteousness, and bribery makes a mockery of them. Judges are supposed to apply justice. But many of them (throughout the world) take secret bribes, which often explains the light sentences they give. Another possible way bribes pervert the words of the righteous is when a bribe causes an otherwise honest man to violate his word about something. Whatever those parts of the scripture mean, they say bribery blinds men, and perverts good words. There are several other scriptures about bribery in the Bible, none of which condone it.

There are two proverbs of Solomon that some have misinterpreted to mean support for bribery. One says, **"A man's gift makes room for him, and brings him before great men"** (Proverbs 18:16). That proverb is simply about generosity, and how it enhances a man's reputation. A gift is not a bribe unless it is used to buy something improperly. The other proverb says, **"A gift in secret pacifies anger, and a present in the bosom, strong wrath"** (Proverbs 21:14). That suggests the gift was compensation for some kind of offense, a non-criminal one. And that would not make it a bribe unless it was done unjustly. Giving the gift in private is just a prudent way to try to correct the wrong that provoked the anger. That Solomon condemned bribery is shown by this proverb: **"He who is greedy of gain troubles his own house, but he who hates bribes shall live"** (Proverbs 15:27).

Part 2:21

DOING HARM

RETRIBUTION

The general principle in the law of Moses about harm done unjustly against someone else is an eye for an eye. In other words, exact retribution. One passage says, **"And he who smites a beast mortally shall make it good, life for life. And if a man causes a blemish in his neighbor, as he has done, so shall it be done to him: injury for injury, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, as he has caused a blemish in a man, so shall it be rendered to him. And he who kills a beast shall make it good. And he who kills a man shall be put to death. Ye shall have one manner of law, as for the sojourner, as for the home-born, for I am Jehovah your God"** (Leviticus 24:18-22). The law of retribution, known as an eye for an eye, is true justice. Those who hate justice condemn the law of retribution. But God loves justice, and so he commanded it of his people.

A common misconception is that Jesus taught against the law of retribution. In fact when he contrasted his teaching with the law of an eye for an eye it was to make retribution even more severe. For example, if I deserved my cheek slapped, I should go beyond it and offer the other. If a court decided I owed a man my coat, I should offer him my cloak as well. What Jesus taught was an eye for an eye plus. He said to go beyond what was required. It was like the command about adultery, not to even desire it in your heart.

Another passage with the law of retribution was about harm to a woman with child. It says, **"And if men strive together, and hurt a woman with child, so that her fruit depart, and yet no harm follow, he shall be surely fined, according as the woman's husband shall lay upon him, and he shall pay as the judges determine. But if any harm follows, then thou shall give life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, burning for burning, wound for wound, stripe for stripe"** (Exodus 21:22-:25). If a man hurt a woman with child and no harm came, he was still punished. In this case with a fine. However, if harm came (to mother or child) he was to experience the exact same harm.

Of course, retribution is warranted only if the injury was unjustified. Therefore, it seems clear a man would need approval from the judges before administering retribution. Not doing so would make him very vulnerable himself to retribution if it was later determined he was not justified. Righteous judges will always be needed to determine if and how retribution should be applied.

ASSAULT

Assault against your father or mother

One of the ten commandments says we are to honor our father and our mother. There are other commands against assaulting them, either physically or verbally. One says, **"And he who smites his father or his mother, shall surely be put to death"** (Exodus 21:15). The other says, **"And he who curses his father or his mother, shall surely be put to**

death" (Exodus 21:17). The act of striking or cursing our father or our mother was a capital crime in the law of Moses. God knows how dangerous to society such disrespect toward parents is, and the penalty he commanded was appropriate. Disrespect and disobedience to parents are now common in pagan America, and are often praised. O how far from the will of God they have gone!

Other kinds of assault

Many assaults do not result in the loss of an eye or a tooth or something else where the law of exact retribution would be appropriate. For example, non-determined internal injuries can result that impair a man. In such cases the law of Moses required the offender to pay for whatever costs were involved in the injured man's recovery plus the loss of his time.

There were other laws about assaulting servants. Assaulting a servant that caused his death was treated as murder. However, if the servant recovered from the assault there was no punishment. The justification was that his servant was "his money." Men were not often going to injure their servants any more than a man today would attack and injure his car. It would take severe provocation. And remember, servants were allowed to escape.

If a man struck his servant and destroyed an eye or a tooth, he was required to give him his freedom. And if you consider the cost of years of labor, that would have been a large loss to the man. Of course, an eye and a tooth were irreplaceable. Nevertheless, it was the Lord's judgment that the servant be given freedom rather than being kept in bondage while his owner suffered the loss of his eye or tooth.

The following passage mentions injury to a servant caused by an ox: **"If the ox gores a man-servant or a maid-servant, there shall be given to their master thirty shekels of silver, and the ox shall be stoned"** (Exodus 21:32). That fine for injury was probably required whether there was any negligence by its owner or not. No doubt the death of a servant caused by negligence was treated like any other; namely, capital punishment.

The Arabs have a law that requires a thief to have his hand cut off. There is no such command in the law of Moses. Such punishment is excessive, cruel, and unjust. However, there is one law of Moses which required that specific punishment. It says, **"When men strive together one with another, and the wife of the one draws near to deliver her husband out of the hand of him who smites him, and puts forth her hand, and takes him by the privates, then thou shall cut off her hand. Thine eye shall have no pity"** (Deuteronomy 25:11-12). That would have been a very aggressive act by a woman against an Israelite man. Moreover, a man's private parts are easily damaged, and injury can cause sterility. Those may be some of the reasons why the penalty was so severe.

The Killing of Men

Murder

The sixth of the ten commandments says, **"Thou shall not murder."** The worse kind of willful harm a man can do to another man is murder him. The law of Moses commanded murderers be put to death. However, that command from God is much older than the law

of Moses. God gave that command at the beginning of the new world after the great worldwide flood. He said to Noah, **"Whoever sheds man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed. For in the image of God he made man"** (Genesis 9:6). What God meant by that was capital punishment for murder.

Murder is a major crime that requires capital punishment for justice. But whether something is murder or not often requires judgment. Consider the dilemma of the Hebrew mothers who were commanded by Pharaoh to throw their baby sons into the river (see Exodus 1:22). And men often kill each other by the thousands in wartime. There are so many shades of grey when it comes to applying laws. Even in wartime some killing is considered a crime. For example, killing prisoners indiscriminately is considered murder by the more civilized nations. But what about the killing of women and children in their homes by bombs? If soldiers fired a cannon at a non-threatening house killing unarmed women and children, would that would be considered murder?

Did President Truman commit murder when he ordered atomic bombs dropped on cities filled with civilian men, women, and children? I think not. Those bombs caused thousands of deaths. Yet it was probably the best way he had to prevent far more deaths on both sides from a prolonged war. At least that was the motive for his judgment. His problem is just one more example of the inferiority of legalism to promote righteousness.

The best way to cope with such problems is for men to have righteous hearts, and want to do good and act justly as God determines. The chaotic world of war often provides many occasions where such judgments must be made. The imposition of legalism upon soldiers, such as "rules of engagement," is another yoke for them to bear.

Later in the laws of Moses God made a distinction between a murderer and a manslayer. Murder is when a man willfully kills another man without justification. The manslayer is when a man kills another by accident. Some manslayers were considered guilty and some not, depending upon circumstances such as how careless the man was.

Lawyers in modern America have increased those classifications. Most of their schemes seem to be used to reduce guilt and punishment. They have also invented a host of legally admissible excuses employed to defeat punishment for killing (as well as other crimes). God loves justice, and laws are supposed to enforce justice. But in pagan America our legal system has degenerated into a game of winning or losing "cases," where justice is considered irrelevant, or at most secondary to the game of sparring with rules and manipulating juries. I read a book written by a retired lawyer and judge entitled *Justice Overruled*. That title describes how the courts of our now pagan country operate.

The law of Moses had a wonderful way of bringing justice against murderers. They were to be killed by a man called the avenger of blood. Those who suffer most from murder, besides the victim, are the members of the victim's family. And Jehovah gave them the right to execute the murderer. (Our modern laws give victims of crime and their families no rights.) After the judges determined who was guilty, a member of the victim's family was given the responsibility of putting the murderer to death.

Execution that way for murderers was commanded by Jehovah: **"The avenger of blood shall put the murderer to death, when he meets him"** (Numbers 35:21). It was not optional, for there was to be no forgiveness. The law says, **"No one set apart, who shall be set apart from among men, shall be ransomed; he shall surely be put to death"** (Leviticus 27:29), and, **"... ye shall take no ransom for the life of a murderer who is guilty of death, but he shall surely be put to death"** (Numbers 35:31), and, **"Thine eye shall not pity him, but thou shall put away the innocent blood from Israel, that it may go well with thee"** (Deuteronomy 19:13). Therefore, it was not an option of the avenger to spare the murderer.

The law also says a murderer could not be put to death at the mouth of a single witness. That was, of course, long before the development of cameras, fingerprints, DNA, and other things of forensic science. There are now forms of evidence that are even more reliable than witnesses. Therefore, in principle multiple witnesses can now include evidence provided by things besides eyewitnesses.

Jehovah was very strict about the execution of murderers, because, like sins of sex, murder pollutes the land. He said, **"So ye shall not pollute the land in which ye are, for blood, it pollutes the land. And no expiation can be made for the land for the blood that is shed in it, but by the blood of him who shed it. And thou shall not defile the land which ye inhabit, in the midst of which I dwell, for I, Jehovah, dwell in the midst of the sons of Israel"** (Numbers 35:33-34).

Nevertheless, laws alone do not guarantee justice. Uriah was one of Israel's faithful soldiers. While Uriah was fighting a battle David committed adultery with his wife. Then he gave the commander of his army an order that led to Uriah being killed by the enemy. It was not murder in the legal sense, and apparently the Israelites could not prove he was guilt of adultery. Therefore, by strict legalism he could not be condemned. God does not intervene to command men to punish every guilty act according to the law. Nevertheless, God punished David by placing him under a curse for the rest of his life. He has his own ways to apply justice when men cannot or will not.

Child sacrifice

The common form of human sacrifice mentioned in the Bible involved infanticide. It was called giving seed (children) to Molech, which was a Moabite god. It was also called passing them through the fire to Molech, which meant burning them on an altar to him. It was strictly condemned by Jehovah, and was forbidden by the law. Anyone guilty was to be stoned by the people. Jehovah said the practice defiled his sanctuary and his holy name. And if the people hid their eyes from such a man, and did not put him to death, then he himself would set his face against the man and his family, and would cut him off from among his people.

Most people today recoil from the idea of sacrificing children to an idol. Yet they think nothing of killing the unborn and disposing them as garbage or cannibalizing their body parts for medical treatment and research. In truth killing children, whether before or after

birth, is murder. No doubt they did it in ancient times for the same reason they do it now, because they do not want them. They want to indulge in sexual pleasure, but they do not want to raise the children that result. Jehovah said if men did not avenge their death, he would. Remember that if you are ever tempted by abortion.

Nevertheless, there can be extenuating circumstances. For example, I am convinced from what I know about the word of God that it would not be wrong to abort the pregnancy of a child conceived by rape. A woman is under no obligation to bear the child of a violent criminal who impregnated her against her will. There are numerous examples in the Bible when children were put to death because of the sins of their fathers. Those of Sodom and Gomorrah come to mind. Nevertheless, you can be sure God will judge the souls of such children righteously. It is great cruelty to require a raped woman to bear such a child.

Unsolved murders

The law describes what should be done after a murder when the murderer was unknown. They were first to gather the elders and judges of the community nearest the crime. Those elders were to select a heifer that had never been worked with or yoked. They were to break the heifer's neck in a valley that was neither plowed nor sown, and that had running water. After that the priests who were the judges were to come near. Then the elders were to wash their hands over the slain heifer, and say, **"Our hands have not shed this blood, neither have our eyes seen it. Forgive, O Jehovah, thy people Israel whom thou have redeemed, and allow no innocent blood *to remain* in the midst of thy people Israel"** (Deuteronomy 21:7-8).

Moses then said the blood would be forgiven them. That meant forgiven the elders not the unknown murderer. And that indicates authorities are held guilty by God if they do not avenge murder properly. He added, **"So shall thou put away the innocent blood from the midst of thee when thou shall do that which is right in the eyes of Jehovah"** (Deuteronomy 21:9).

How differently murders are seen by this pagan generation of Americans. Our leaders give the job of crime investigation to law enforcement officers to solve if they can. Unsolved crimes including murders are recorded, filed away, and usually forgotten. And no sense of guilt is felt by our rulers. The sense of value of human life has plunged since our country has officially abandoned faith in Christ.

Death caused by negligence

An example of death caused by negligence is given in the law. It involves livestock. Since the time of Abraham the primary occupation of the Hebrews had been raising livestock. And the example mentioned was about oxen, which were the most powerful of the animals they possessed. The passage says, **"And if an ox gores a man or a woman to death, the ox shall surely be stoned, and its flesh shall not be eaten, but the owner of the ox shall be acquitted. But if the ox was accustomed to gore in time past, and it has been testified to its owner, and he has not kept it in, but it has killed a man or a woman, the ox shall be stoned, and its owner shall also be put to death. If a ransom is laid on**

him, then he shall give for the redemption of his life whatever is laid upon him. Whether it has gored a son, or has gored a daughter, according to this judgment it shall be done to him" (Exodus 21:28-31).

In that example an ox was the killer. Nevertheless, its owner was considered guilty as well, if he knew it was dangerous but did nothing to prevent an attack. The penalty in that case was death for the ox and its owner. However, the passage also says he could give a ransom for his life, but what the law means about goring a son or daughter is not clear. Children were no doubt more likely to be killed when gored, and they may have been inclined to be more tolerant if children were the victims.

Whatever it means, the negligent owner could redeem his life by giving whatever was "laid upon him." That was probably determined by the family of the victim and the judges. However, that provision says, **"If a ransom is laid upon him ... ."** The word "if" suggests a ransom was not always an option for the man. The victim's family and the judges apparently were permitted to allow the owner of the ox to ransom his life, or not allow him, depending upon the circumstances of the case.

That law was obviously a mere example of deaths caused by negligence and was not intended to be limited to oxen. Pure legalism does not promote justice, and justice is what God wants. The principle of that law teaches that the death of a man caused by negligence is a capital crime, unless the circumstances of a particular case are judged such as to warrant payment of a ransom instead. There are countless extenuating circumstances that are possible with accidental deaths. Nevertheless, the law gave no provision to ransom a murderer. Remember this passage: **"... ye shall take no ransom for the life of a murderer who is guilty of death, but he shall surely be put to death"** (Numbers 35:31).

There was another law about accident prevention. It says, **When thou build a new house, then thou shall make a guard rail for thy roof, that thou not bring blood upon thy house, if any man falls from there"** (Deuteronomy 22:8). Houses in those days typically had flat roofs that were used as living space for various purposes. Failure to add a guard rail made a man responsible for any injury or death caused by a fall from the roof.

The manslayer

The law also made provision for unavoidable killing. An example was given of an axe head flying loose and killing a man. If somebody killed his neighbor unawares, without hating him in the past, he was not to be stoned as a murderer. He was called a manslayer, and he was required to flee to one of the cities of refuge. And any time he departed from his city of refuge he could be killed legally by the avenger of blood.

The manslayer was also required to remain in his city of refuge until the death of the current high priest, which would have averaged many years. Such a law provided a great incentive for men to be very careful not to kill anybody accidentally. Incidentally, the term manslaughter in American law is not exactly the same thing as described here.

One passage about that law says, **"... the congregation shall judge between the smiter and the avenger of blood according to these ordinances. And the congregation shall**

deliver the manslayer out of the hand of the avenger of blood, and the congregation shall restore him to his city of refuge where he fled" (Numbers 35:24-25). The avenger of blood was required to accept the judgment of the congregation (the community involved) before he had the right to attack the manslayer. That would help insure justice was done. For they needed to decide whether the death was a true accident, or was caused by the negligence or carelessness of the killer. Accidental deaths as a result of negligence or carelessness were to be treated as murder not manslaughter. A common example of that is death caused by drunk driving. Such killers are as guilty as murderers, and should be put to death. For such deaths are fully preventable.

If a manslayer normally dwelt in one of the cities of refuge he was probably required to flee to one of the others. Otherwise, his inconvenience would have been far less than what others would have experienced. And the inhabitants of a city of refuge would have had less incentive to be careful about the life of another. The law does not mention that possibility, but it is impossible to describe every circumstance of every law. That is what judges are for, and there will always be the need for righteous judges.

Jehovah said the sons of Israel were to choose three cities as cities of refuge. And he said if he enlarged their border they should choose three more. Not long before the sons of Israel invaded their promised land two and a half tribes settled on the eastern side of the Jordan. Consequently, three cities were chosen there as well as three for the western side. Thus, there were eventually six cities of refuge.

Punish only the guilty

In the sight of God every man is responsible for how he lives and behaves. In order to promote the justice he loves, Jehovah gave a law forbidding them to put any man to death for the guilt of another. He said, **"The fathers shall not be put to death for the sons, neither shall the sons be put to death for the fathers. Every man shall be put to death for his own sin"** (Deuteronomy 24:16).

That law, as with most every law, has its range of applicability. It was not intended to cover every situation. For example, the sons of Israel were commanded by God to exterminate certain wicked peoples. They were to destroy every man, woman, and child. No doubt there were some innocent young children who perished with their sinful fathers. That seems wrong to us, but God never does anything wrong. We, like Job during the time of his great suffering, cannot understand all of God's purposes. It is our duty to trust and obey him, whether we understand the justice of everything he does or not. God has promised a fabulous reward for all who trust and obey him.

The fact is, throughout history in the wars of the world, innocent souls have been killed, sometimes deliberately and sometimes inadvertently. It is impossible to prevent. What is most important to us is the destiny of our eternal souls, and not what may happen to our bodies. And God will never allow an innocent soul to suffer beyond what is experienced in this life.

KIDNAPPING

There were two laws about kidnapping. One says, **"And he who steals a man, and sells him, or if he be found in his hand, he shall surely be put to death"** (Exodus 21:16). The other says, **"If a man is found stealing any of his brothers of the sons of Israel, and he deals with him harshly, or sells him, then that thief shall die. So shall thou put away the evil from the midst of thee"** (Deuteronomy 24:7). Apparently a kidnapper could escape the death penalty if he did not abuse his captive and voluntarily released him. However, if he was caught with the captive, or if he had abused or sold him, that required the death penalty. I have never heard of a kidnapper receiving the death penalty in America, unless he murdered his captive. And even those men are not often put to death.

Nine times in the book of Deuteronomy Moses said they would "put away the evil" if they punished the offender. Eight of those times were about the death penalty, which is much opposed by many during these adulterous times. Many sinners love the guilty more than the innocent.

HARM TO OTHER THINGS

Since Israel was an agricultural nation its laws were focused on things relevant to agriculture. And the laws about harm to other things dealt with livestock and crops. The general principle of those laws was that of compensation for damages caused, and examples are given. One law was about harm caused by negligence. It says, **"And if a man shall open a pit, or if a man shall dig a pit and not cover it, and an ox or a donkey falls in it, the owner of the pit shall make it good; he shall give money to the owner of it, and the dead *beast* shall be his"** (Exodus 21:33-34).

Another law was about one ox goring another. It says, **"And if one man's ox hurts another's, so that it dies, then they shall sell the live ox, and divide the price of it, and the dead they shall also divide. Or if it be known that the ox was accustomed to gore in time past, and its owner has not kept it in, he shall surely pay ox for ox, and the dead *beast* shall be his own"** (Exodus 21:35-36).

The law about harm to crops says, **"If a man shall cause a field or vineyard to be eaten, and shall let his beast loose, and it feeds in another man's field, he shall make restitution of the best of his own field, and of the best of his own vineyard. If fire breaks out, and catches in thorns, so that the shocks of grain, or the standing grain, or the field are consumed, he who kindled the fire shall surely make restitution"** (Exodus 22:5-6). The law of retribution was always to be applied.

Part 2:22

USE OF SPEECH

WITNESSING

Men of Israel could not be convicted of wrongdoing on the evidence of a single witness. The law of Moses required at least two: **"One witness shall not rise up against a man for any iniquity, or for any sin, in any sin that he sins. At the mouth of two witnesses, or at the mouth of three witnesses, shall a matter be established"** (Deuteronomy 19:15). In the book of Numbers Jehovah had commanded two or three witnesses to convict a murderer. This command in Deuteronomy extends that to include charges of any kind against a man. Two or three witnesses were required, and those witnesses were sufficient to convict.

In modern times there are many reliable sources of evidence available about crimes. And in my judgment, those sources are equivalent to witnesses. Therefore, the practice of accepting the testimony of a single witness seems to me acceptable if there is other supporting evidence that is as good as, or better than, another witness. Indeed, it may not be necessary to have even a single eyewitness if other kinds of evidence are sufficient to reveal the truth. The whole purpose of laws like these is to help insure truth and justice, to convict the guilty and acquit the innocent. And the risk of convicting falsely is greatly increased when evidence is limited to only one witness.

FALSE WITNESSING

The ninth of the ten commandments says, **"Thou shall not bear false witness against thy neighbor."** That law was not intended to be for court testimony only, but for every situation involving the transmission of information. Court testimony is only one example. Various acts of deception to gain advantage are other examples. Slander is another. Notice Jehovah did not say thou shall not bear false witness period; he qualified it to our neighbors. As part of an answer to a Pharisee, Jesus quoted the command that he should love his neighbor as himself. When the Pharisee asked Jesus who was his neighbor, he told him the story we call the Good Samaritan (see Luke 10:30). That example of a neighbor was an innocent man who was in dire need. The Samaritan came to his aid after the man had been seriously injured by bandits.

I mention that because of the tendency of some men to claim it a sin to bear false witness to anybody, even mortal enemies in wartime. God never intended for this command to support evil. And we are not bound to testify truthfully to every wicked man or enemy soldier.

Probably the greatest offenders of the command against false witnessing are those who engage in slander. Slander is easy to employ, hard to defend against, and rarely punished. It is a major practice of the devil and his disciples. In fact, the literal meaning of the Biblical word devil is "false accuser." I have seen slander employed numerous times. Typically, if and when the truth becomes known, much damage has already been done to the reputation

of the victim, and the slanderers just shrug their shoulders and move on. It is now a standard practice by most politicians and their allies in this adulterous generation of Americans.

Slander usually begins with what is considered harmless gossip; although gossip is never harmless. I suspect many otherwise good men are inhibited from speaking out and opposing evil for fear of gossip and slander against them. For it can destroy a man's life. As Solomon said, **"The hypocrite destroys his neighbor with his mouth, but the righteous shall be delivered through knowledge"** (Proverbs 11:9). Yet we should never shirk our duty to God. Remember the words of Jesus: **"For whoever wants save his life will lose it, and whoever will lose his life for my sake will find it"** (Matthew 16:25).

There is another marvelous law of justice that concerns false witnesses. That law says **"If an unrighteous witness rises up against any man to testify against him of wrong-doing, then both the men, between whom the controversy is, shall stand before Jehovah, before the priests and the judges that shall be in those days, and the judges shall make diligent inquiry. And, behold, if the witness is a false witness, and has testified falsely against his brother, then ye shall do to him, as he had thought to do to his brother"** (Deuteronomy 19:16-19).

I have never heard of that being done in modern America; it may have been done in the past. O that it would be done always and everywhere. False witnessing is a serious problem in our land now because it is an effective way to attack someone with little chance of being punished if exposed. It is commonly used in marital disputes, especially in contests about the custody of children. If that law of Moses were applied in America to false witnessing I have no doubt its frequency would greatly diminish. For as soon as Moses gave that law, he said, **"So shall thou put away the evil from the midst of thee. And those who remain shall hear, and fear, and shall henceforth commit no more any such evil in the midst of thee. And thine eyes shall not pity: life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot"** (Deuteronomy 19:20-21).

GOSSIP

There are some things that do not need to be, or should not be shared with others. Gossip is the name for the most common of that kind. Gossip is very popular because people love it, and they rarely realize the harm created. I know of no law in America making gossip a crime. However, I have read news reports of a city in Colombia, South America that made it so after a murder was committed as a result of gossip.

Gossip is condemned throughout the Bible. In the New Testament James warned about how deadly the tongue can be. He said, **"So also the tongue is a little body-part, and boasts greatly. Behold a little fire, how much wood it kindles. And the tongue is a fire, the world of unrighteousness. Thus, the tongue is made to lead among our body-parts, defiling the whole body, and setting the cycle of nature on fire, and being set on fire by hell"** (James 3:5-6). Being set on fire by hell probably means it is provoked by the elements of evil.

Jehovah commanded against gossip in the law, and therefore it was a crime for the sons of Israel. The law says, **"Thou shall not go up and down as a talebearer among thy people, neither shall thou stand against the blood of thy neighbor. I am Jehovah"** (Leviticus 19:16).

Gossip in fact is one of the most vicious and insidious of evils. I have no doubt the spirit of the devil is at work in it, because it does no good but only harm. Yet it is very commonly practiced by the great majority, including those who claim to be disciples of Christ. Indeed, our Christian schools even require their students to make anonymous reports about their teachers, which in fact are just gossip. For their administrators require no verification of the truth or accuracy of what the students say, and yet they use that "information" to judge the effectiveness of teachers. It is an evil they have copied from unbelievers who originated the practice in the academic world. And the example they give to those students encourages spreading the evil of talebearing. God will hold them and all others who practice gossip of any kind accountable.

Speaking Ill of a Ruler

One of the laws of Moses says, **"Thou shall not ... speak ill of a ruler of thy people"** (Exodus 22:28). Paul quoted that law when he was being tried by the leaders of the Jews. The record says, **"And Paul, after looking intently at the council, said, Men, brothers, I have been a citizen in all good conscience to God until this day. And the high priest Ananias ordered those who stood by him to strike his mouth. Then Paul said to him, God is going to smite thee, a whitewashed wall. Thou even sit judging me according to the law, and violating law, thou command me to be struck? And those who stood by said, Thou revile God's high priest? And Paul said, I had not known, brothers, that he is a high priest, for it is written, Thou shall not speak ill of a ruler of thy people"** (Acts 23:1-5).

Speaking ill against our neighbors is bad enough, but it is even more destructive to peace and order when it is against a ruler, because it encourages rebellion. If a ruler is thought to be guilty, then those with the proper authority should examine him. And those who have evidence against him can then testify. Such testimony is clearly not included in the command against speaking ill of a ruler. Paul called the high priest a whitewashed wall because that priest violated the law during the court hearing. It was not his accusation of violating the law that he apologized for; it was calling him a whitewashed wall. Even though the high priest deserved it Paul did not have the authority to rebuke him. Speaking ill of rulers in America is rampant, and contributes to our increasing lawlessness and national division.

Part 2:23

FORGIVENESS

FORGIVENESS AND THE LAW

Forgiveness is currently one of the most misunderstood and misapplied of the concepts of the Bible, especially among Christians. It is now commonly taught that Christians are obligated to excuse guilt totally and unconditionally. However, God never taught that kind of forgiveness. In fact nowhere in the law of Moses were the people commanded to forgive anything. On the contrary, they were warned not to forgive.

For example, when Jehovah commanded the extermination of the peoples of their promised land, he said, "**Thine eye shall not pity them"** (Deuteronomy 7:16). Regarding any man who tried to persuade them to worship another god, he said, **"... thou shall not consent to him, nor hearken to him. Neither shall thine eye pity him, neither shall thou spare, neither shall thou conceal him, but thou shall surely kill him"** (Deuteronomy 13:8-9). Regarding murderers, he said, **"Thine eye shall not pity him, but thou shall put away the innocent blood from Israel, that it may go well with thee"** (Deuteronomy 19:13). Regarding a man who testified falsely against another man, he said, **"... ye shall do to him, as he had thought to do to his brother. ... And thine eyes shall not pity: life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot"** (Deuteronomy 19:19-21). And about a woman who tried to defend her husband by grasping the privates of his adversary, he said, **"... thou shall cut off her hand. Thine eye shall have no pity"** (Deuteronomy 25:12). With violations of the law of God only he can forgive. And we sin if we forgive violations of his law, because we have not that right, for only God can forgive sins. Even the Pharisees were right about that (see Mark 2:7).

There are several places in the law of Moses that tell about God's forgiveness. Most of them are about being forgiven after making an atoning sacrifice. Here is one example of that: **"And the priest shall make atonement for him with the ram of the trespass offering before Jehovah for his sin which he has sinned. And the sin which he has sinned shall be forgiven him"** (Leviticus 19:22).

Another passage that speaks of God's forgiveness is about making a vow. The first part of the command says, **"Also when a woman vows a vow to Jehovah, and binds herself by a bond, being in her father's house, in her youth, and her father hears her vow, and her bond with which she has bound her soul, and her father remains silent at her, then all her vows shall stand, and every bond with which she has bound her soul shall stand. But if her father disallows her in the day that he hears, none of her vows, or of her bonds with which she has bound her soul, shall stand. And Jehovah will forgive her, because her father disallowed her"** (Numbers 30:3-5). The passage continues by saying a husband could disallow the vow of his wife in the same way. God's forgiveness in those cases was not the forgiveness of sin, but release from an obligation.

The only other passage in the law that mentions God's forgiveness is this one: **"And Jehovah descended in the cloud, and stood with him there, and proclaimed the name of Jehovah. And Jehovah passed by before him, and proclaimed, Jehovah, Jehovah, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abundant in loving kindness and truth, keeping loving kindness for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and who will by no means clear *the guilty*, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the sons, and upon the sons's sons, upon the third and upon the fourth generation"** (Exodus 34:5-7). Notice the passage says that Jehovah forgives iniquity, transgression, and sin, but he will by no means clear the guilty. Which obviously means his forgiveness does not mean the total absence of punishment.

Examples of Forgiveness

The Israelites in the wilderness

When the Israelites reached the Jordan river after their exodus from Egypt they sent spies into the promised land. When the spies returned all but two of the men gave a discouraging report. As a result the people turned against God and were about to stone Moses. Then the glory of Jehovah appeared in the tabernacle of the congregation before all the children of Israel, and he said to Moses, **"How long will this people despise me? And how long will they not believe in me, for all the signs which I have wrought among them? I will smite them with the pestilence, and disinherit them, and will make of thee a nation greater and mightier than they"** (Numbers 14:11-12).

As Moses had done when the people sinned before, he gave reasons for sparing the people, and then said, **"Pardon, I pray thee, the iniquity of this people according to the greatness of thy loving kindness, and according as thou have forgiven this people, from Egypt even until now"** (Numbers 14:19). Then Jehovah said, **"I have pardoned according to thy word, but in very deed, as I live, and as all the earth shall be filled with the glory of Jehovah, because all those men who have seen my glory, and my signs, which I wrought in Egypt and in the wilderness, yet have tempted me these ten times, and have not hearkened to my voice, surely they shall not see the land which I swore to their fathers, neither shall any of them who despised me see it"** (Numbers 14:20-23).

Then Jehovah told Moses, **"Say to them, As I live, says Jehovah, surely as ye have spoken in my ears, so will I do to you. Your dead bodies shall fall in this wilderness. And all who were numbered of you, according to your whole number, from twenty years old and upward, who have murmured against me, surely ye shall not come into the land, concerning which I swore that I would make you dwell in it, except Caleb the son of Jephunneh, and Joshua the son of Nun. But your little ones, that ye said would be a prey, them I will bring in, and they shall know the land which ye have rejected.**

"But as for you, your dead bodies shall fall in this wilderness. And your sons shall be wanderers in the wilderness forty years, and shall bear your whoredoms, until your dead bodies be consumed in the wilderness. After the number of the days in which ye

spied out the land, even forty days, for every day a year, ye shall bear your iniquities, even forty years, and ye shall know my alienation. I, Jehovah, have spoken, surely I will do this to all this evil congregation that are gathered together against me. In this wilderness they shall be consumed, and there they shall die" (Numbers 14:28-35).

Notice that although God told Moses he had pardoned the people, nevertheless, because of their sins every man from twenty years old and upward (except for two) would die in the wilderness without ever having seen the promised land. Hence, God's pardon did not mean an absence of any punishment. The people were spared immediate death, but they were still punished by never being able to see the land he had intended to give them. It was going to be given to their children instead. When the people heard of their punishment they confessed their sin and repented, for the Bible says, **"And Moses told these words to all the sons of Israel, and the people mourned greatly. And they rose up early in the morning, and got up to the top of the mountain, saying, Lo, we are here, and will go up to the place which Jehovah has promised, for we have sinned"** (Numbers 14:39-40).

But their confession and repentance did not cause God to take away their punishment. Even when they wanted to go to war immediately against the Amalekites and the Canaanites to prove their repentance, Moses warned them against it, because God was not going to take away their punishment, even though he pardoned them. Yet they went anyway, but were defeated, for they found no place for repentance. They were like Esau, who, the Bible says, **"... in place of one meal sold his birthright. For ye also know that wanting afterward to inherit the blessing, he was rejected, for he found no place of repentance, though having sought it with tears"** (Hebrews 12:16-17).

Moses

Consider the example of Moses. At one time when the Israelites were complaining about not having enough water, God commanded Moses to speak to a rock in the sight of the people, and it would gush forth water for them. However, in a rash moment, and completely out of character, Moses said to the people, **"Hear now, ye rebels. Shall we bring forth water to you out of this rock?"** (Numbers 20:10). Then he struck the rock instead of speaking to it as Jehovah had commanded him. God did bring forth water from the rock, but he said to Moses, **"Because ye did not believe in me, to sanctify me in the eyes of the sons of Israel, therefore ye shall not bring this assembly into the land which I have given them"** (Numbers 20:12).

Later Moses pleaded for forgiveness, saying, **"O lord Jehovah, thou have begun to show thy servant thy greatness, and thy strong hand, for what god is there in heaven or in earth, that can do according to thy works, and according to thy mighty acts? Let me go over, I pray thee, and see the good land that is beyond the Jordan, that goodly mountain, and Lebanon"** (Deuteronomy 3:24-25). But God said to him, **"It shall be enough for thee. Speak no more to me of this matter. Get thee up to the top of Pisgah, and lift up thine eyes westward, and northward, and southward, and eastward, and behold with thine eyes, for thou shall not go over this Jordan"** (Deuteron-

omy 3:26-27). That God forgave the eternal spirit of Moses, receiving him into heaven, we know from scriptures in the New Testament (see Matthew 17:1-3). Nevertheless, Moses did not escape the punishment on earth for his sin, even though he pleaded with God about it.

Miriam

Consider another example of how God's forgiveness includes some kind of punishment. This one concerns Moses' sister, Miriam: **"And Miriam and Aaron spoke against Moses because of the Cushite woman whom he had married, for he had married a Cushite woman. And they said, Has Jehovah indeed spoken only with Moses? Has he not spoken also with us? And Jehovah heard it. Now the man Moses was very meek, above all the men who were upon the face of the earth. And Jehovah spoke suddenly to Moses, and to Aaron, and to Miriam, Come out ye three to the tent of meeting. And the three came out. And Jehovah came down in a pillar of cloud, and stood at the door of the Tent, and called Aaron and Miriam. And they both came forth.**

"And he said, Hear now my words. If there be a prophet among you, I Jehovah will make myself known to him in a vision. I will speak with him in a dream. My servant Moses is not so. He is faithful in all my house. With him I will speak mouth to mouth, even manifestly, and not in dark speeches, and he shall behold the form of Jehovah. Why then were ye not afraid to speak against my servant, against Moses? And the anger of Jehovah was kindled against them, and he departed. And the cloud removed from over the Tent. And, behold, Miriam was leprous, as snow. And Aaron looked upon Miriam, and, behold, she was leprous" (Numbers 12:1-10).

That passage says **"Moses was very meek, above all the men who were upon the face of the earth,"** and so he did not defend himself to his brother and sister. Therefore, Jehovah defended him, and he did so by both praising Moses and rebuking Aaron and Miriam. And not only did he rebuke them both, but he struck Miriam with leprosy. Aaron then pleaded with Moses, and Moses pleaded with God.

Here is what the text says next: **"And Aaron said to Moses, Oh, my lord, lay not, I pray thee, sin upon us, in which we have done foolishly, and in which we have sinned. Let her not, I pray, be as one dead, of whom the flesh is half consumed when he comes out of his mother's womb. And Moses cried to Jehovah, saying, Heal her, O God, I beseech thee. And Jehovah said to Moses, If her father had but spit in her face, should she not be ashamed seven days? Let her be shut up outside the camp seven days, and after that she shall be brought in again. And Miriam was shut up outside the camp seven days. And the people journeyed not till Miriam was brought in again"** (Numbers 12:11-15).

Notice again that although God forgave the sin, nevertheless, he imposed some punishment. For Miriam had to endure her leprosy for seven days, being isolated from everybody else according to the law. Why Aaron was not also stricken we are not told. That she was punished so severely suggests she instigated their charges against Moses. There are

a great many things that God has not revealed to us. What is recorded in the Bible is enough for his purposes. It is as he told Paul, **"My grace is sufficient for thee"** (Second Corinthians 12:9). Our duty is to trust him, for he alone is trustworthy.

The destruction of Judah

About nine centuries before Christ the nation of Israel was divided into a northern and a southern kingdom. The southern kingdom was called Judah because the great majority of its citizens were in that tribe. About two centuries after the division the northern kingdom was conquered, and its people were carried away captive by the Assyrians. The northern kingdom never recovered. About a century and a half later Judah was conquered, and its people were carried away captive by the Babylonians and Chaldeans. Jerusalem and the temple were completely destroyed in that conquest.

The book of Lamentations is about the many sorrows caused by the defeat of Judah. Jeremiah the prophet was probably the author of that book. After a detailed description of all their miseries, the author gave this lesson: **"This I recall to my mind, therefore I have hope: *It is of* Jehovah's loving kindnesses that we are not consumed** [completely]**, because his compassions do not fail. They are new every morning. Great is thy faithfulness. Jehovah is my portion, says my soul, therefore I will hope in him. Jehovah is good to those who wait for him, to the soul who seeks him. It is good that a man should hope and quietly wait for the salvation of Jehovah.**

"It is good for a man that he bear the yoke in his youth. Let him sit alone and keep silence, because he has laid it upon him. Let him put his mouth in the dust, if so be there may be hope. Let him give his cheek to him who smites him. Let him be filled full with reproach. For the Lord will not cast off forever. For though he causes grief, yet he will have compassion according to the multitude of his loving kindnesses. For he does not afflict willingly, nor grieve the sons of men.

"To crush under foot all the prisoners of the earth, to turn aside the right of a man before the face of the Most High, to subvert a man in his cause, the Lord does not approve. Who is he that says, and it comes to pass, when the Lord does not command it? Out of the mouth of the Most High does there not come evil and good?

"Why does a living man complain, a man for the punishment of his sins? Let us search and try our ways, and turn again to Jehovah. Let us lift up our heart with our hands to God in the heavens. We have transgressed and have rebelled. Thou have not pardoned. Thou have covered with anger and pursued us. Thou have slain; thou have not pitied. Thou have covered thyself with a cloud, so that no prayer can pass through. Thou have made us an off-scouring and refuse in the midst of the peoples. All our enemies have opened their mouth wide against us. Fear and the pit have come upon us, devastation and destruction" (Lamentations 3:21-47).

Those words speak both of the punishment of Jehovah, and of his compassion and loving kindnesses. Notice how the author encouraged a man to endure God's punishment: **"Let him give his cheek to him who smites him. Let him be filled full with reproach. For**

the Lord will not cast off forever. For though he causes grief, yet he will have compassion according to the multitude of his loving kindnesses. For he does not afflict willingly, nor grieve the sons of men."

Notice also that he told how God will not pardon transgression, and we have no right to complain about our punishment: **"Why does a living man complain, a man for the punishment of his sins? Let us search and try our ways, and turn again to Jehovah. Let us lift up our heart with our hands to God in the heavens. We have transgressed and have rebelled. Thou have not pardoned."**

For those of us who belong to God he will forgive or pardon in the sense of not condemning altogether. Nevertheless, he will not forgive or pardon completely. We will always suffer some kind of chastisement for our guilt, and the Bible teaches that we should endure it patiently. Moreover, we should be grateful that he does not punish us as fully as we deserve.

Forgiveness and Morality

The law of Moses was designed to create a nation of very high moral standards. And that cannot be done when sin is tolerated and forgiven completely. The more sin is tolerated and forgiven the more sin multiplies, and when sin multiplies so do their evil consequences. Consider these passages about punishment from Deuteronomy: **"And all Israel shall hear, and fear, and shall no more do any such wickedness as this is in the midst of thee"** (13:11); **"And all the people shall hear, and fear, and do no more presumptuously"** (17:13); **"So shall thou put away the evil from the midst of thee. And those who remain shall hear, and fear, and shall henceforth commit no more any such evil in the midst of thee"** (19:19-20).

Punishment done God's way has a powerful deterrent effect. It prevents far more sorrows and deaths than the false compassion of forgiving law violations. The only compassion such forgiveness has is for the guilty, those who do not deserve it. And compassion for wicked men is especially useless, for the prophet Isaiah said, **"Let favor be shown to a wicked man, yet he will not learn righteousness. In the land of uprightness he will deal wrongfully, and will not behold the majesty of Jehovah"** (Isaiah 26:10). Mercy and forgiveness do not deter them. And let no man claim that God loves everybody including wicked men. Consider these words of the prophet Malachi: **"Ye have wearied Jehovah with your words. Yet ye say, How have we wearied him? In that ye say, Everyone who does evil is good in the sight of Jehovah, and he delights in them ..."** (Malachi 2:17).

God wants justice done, and this is justice: "**Say ye of the righteous, that *it is* well, for they shall eat the fruit of their doings. Woe to the wicked! *It is* ill *with him*, for what his hands have done shall be done to him.** (Isaiah 3:10-11). Not applying proper justice (true justice) to criminals is cruel to their many victims, for it only encourages more lawlessness. And that is also true when various excuses and devices are used to declare criminals not guilty, such as legal technicalities, plea bargaining, and insanity defenses. When crimes are punished *properly*, as God has shown how, the temptation to commit them is greatly re-

duced. And according to the Scriptures it does not take many examples of punishment to put the fear of sin into the hearts of the people. That encourages a higher degree of morality and greatly reduces evil, which then promotes peace and prosperity. For this truth is timeless and universal: **"Righteousness exalts a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people"** (Proverbs 14:34).

When the Israelites were in the wilderness God commanded a man be stoned who had gathered sticks on the sabbath. Such a response is completely alien to this permissive generation of Americans. They cannot understand the value of such strictness; it seems to them too extreme. They even condemn God for doing such things; I have heard them. They cannot understand because they have turned from the righteousness of God and become blind. These words of Jesus apply to them: **"Because of this I speak to them in parables, because seeing they see not, and hearing they hear not, nor do they understand. And in them is fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah, which says, By hearing ye will hear, and will, no, not understand, and seeing ye will see, and will, no, not perceive. For this people's heart became fat, and their ears hear heavily, and their eyes are shut, lest they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and should turn, and I will heal them. But blessed are your eyes, because they see, and your ears, because they hear"** (Matthew 13:13-16).

Forgiveness and Christ

The law of Moses commanded the people not to forgive. However, when Jesus taught his disciples he commanded them to forgive. He said, for example, **"And whenever ye may stand praying, forgive, if ye have anything against any man, so that also your Father in the heavens will forgive you your trespasses"** (Mark 11:25). Does that mean Jesus was teaching against the law of Moses? No, because Jesus was referring to personal trespasses against us, and not trespasses against the law of God. Does anyone think Jesus meant we should forgive and not punish men who commit murder? And what about theft or adultery or bearing false witness? We have no right to excuse from punishment men who violate the laws of God. And when men fail to punish they themselves become law violators.

There is another command Jesus gave about forgiveness that should be explained: **"Jesus therefore said to them again, Peace to you. As the Father has sent me, I also send you. And after saying this, he breathed on them, and says to them, Receive ye the Holy Spirit. If ye forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them. If ye retain of any, they are retained"** (John 20:21-23). That was when he spoke to his apostles after his resurrection. They were to be his spokesmen on earth, and he gave them special powers. They were given the power to perform miracles, and they were given the authority to forgive sins. However, that only lasted until the New Testament was written. No man after those early days (when the church was being established and the New Testament was being written) has the power to perform miracles or the authority to forgive sins. Notice also Jesus did not command his apostles to forgive. He simply gave them that authority to use as they thought was good.

There is a passage from James that is often used to promote total and unconditional forgiveness. He said, **"Mercy triumphs over judgment"** (James 2:13), judgment meaning the application of justice. However, the full text of the passage says this: **"For the judgment is merciless to him who did no mercy. Mercy triumphs over judgment"** (James 2:13). There will be no mercy shown to those who show no mercy, which means they will receive no forgiveness. The mercy that triumphs over judgment is the grace of God given to us through Jesus Christ. That passage does not mean we should always show mercy instead of judgment, which is what many false teachers claim.

God has shown mercy and forgiveness to those who have faith in Christ because he redeemed us from the judgment of law. Nevertheless while we are still on the earth God will punish us when we offend him, even though he forgives us; forgiveness does not mean there is no punishment. (None of those who belong to Christ will offend him in heaven, because of our faith and our love for him, and we will no longer need to struggle with a body subject to the law of sin.)

The following passages tell how God will punish us while we remain on the earth: **"And have ye forgotten the exhortation that reasons with you as with sons, My son, do not disparage the chastening of the Lord, nor become disheartened when punished by him? For whom the Lord loves he chastens. And he whips every son whom he receives. Because of chastening ye endure; God is treating you as with sons, for what son is there whom a father does not chasten?"** (Hebrews 12:5-7), and, **"Behold, a righteous man shall be recompensed in the earth, how much more the wicked man and the sinner!"** (Proverbs 11:31).

Forgiveness, as taught in the Bible, does not mean experiencing no consequences. Forgiveness means we are not punished as fully as justice requires. When God forgives us he does not punish us as severely as we deserve. There are many examples in the Bible showing that God's forgiveness in this life is never total and unconditional. Therefore, why should ours be?

The Need for Repentance

There are other things that should moderate forgiveness. For example, God requires repentance to have forgiveness. And repentance must be demonstrated by good fruits. For when the Jews came to John the immerser he admonished them, saying, **"Bring forth therefore fruits worthy of repentance"** (Luke 3:8). And when Paul told king Agrippa of his vision of Christ, he said, **"Whereupon, king Agrippa, I did not become disobedient to the heavenly vision, but declaring first to those at Damascus and then at Jerusalem, and in all the region of Judea, and to the Gentiles, to repent and return to God, doing works worthy of repentance"** (Acts 26:19).

Losing Forgiveness

Here is another lesson that is hard for this most sinful and adulterous generation of Americans. It is commonly taught that God's forgiveness is permanent. I have even heard preach-

ers say he literally forgets our sin. However, Jesus taught otherwise. For if we live unworthy of his forgiveness, God will un-forgive. Consider the parable of the bondman who owed an enormous debt to his lord (see Matthew 18:23). After that bondman was forgiven the debt, he went out and refused to forgive a fellow bondman of a very small debt. Here is how Jesus ends the story: **"Then his lord having summoned him, he says to him, Thou evil bondman, I forgave thee all that debt because thou besought me. Was it not necessary for thee also to be merciful to thy fellow bondman, as I also was merciful to thee? And having become angry, his lord delivered him to the tormentors until he would pay all that was due to him. So also my heavenly Father will do to you, if ye do not forgive each man his brother, from your hearts, their trespasses"** (Matthew 18:33-35).

Because that bondman was himself unforgiving, his lord nullified his earlier forgiveness, and required that he pay the debt. And so it will be with God, who was represented by the lord in the parable. In that parable Jesus taught that God will take away his forgiveness of sins from men who later prove by their actions to be unworthy of forgiveness.

Therefore, it is very important for us to be wise, and forgive judiciously. For Paul said, **"Or know ye not that the sanctified will judge the world? And if the world is judged by you, are ye unworthy of very small legal disputes? Know ye not that we will judge heavenly agents? Then why not mundane things?"** (First Corinthians 6:2-3). Jesus also admonished us to judge some things, saying, **"And also why do ye not judge yourselves what is right?"** (Luke 12:57). He also taught us to judge wisely, saying, **"Judge not according to appearance, but judge righteous judgment"** (John 7:24), and, **"Become ye therefore wise as serpents, and innocent as doves"** (Matthew 10:16).

Let no man demand that you forgive totally and unconditionally. Use your wisdom, as God does, to judge whether to forgive, how to forgive, and how much to forgive. And remember, it is no man's right to forgive anyone who sins against another man or group of men. And that restriction includes rulers and judges. It is another of our God-given rights that our evil rulers have robbed of us. If another man owes a debt to me it is wrong for anyone else to excuse him of that debt. Rulers and judges have no more right to forgive offenses committed against me, than they have of excusing debts owed to me. Only he who was offended has the right to forgive the offender. Our corrupt rulers have become thieves and robbers of many of our God-given rights. Neither is it any man's right to forgive those who sin against God.

Part 2:24

TEACHING AND OBEDIENCE

TEACH THE COMMANDMENTS

The sons of Israel were commanded to display and teach the laws of Jehovah. Moses said they were to be upon their hearts, and that could only be done by learning. Therefore, Moses said they were to be talked about and displayed frequently. He said, **"And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be upon thy heart. And thou shall teach them diligently to thy sons, and shall talk of them when thou sit in thy house, and when thou walk by the way, and when thou lie down, and when thou rise up. And thou shall bind them for a sign upon thy hand, and they shall be for frontlets between thine eyes. And thou shall write them upon the door-posts of thy house, and upon thy gates"** (Deuteronomy 6:6-9). He repeated that command farther in the book of Deuteronomy, and he said it would multiply their days as the days of the heavens.

He also commanded them to teach their sons the meaning of all the commandments of Jehovah. They were to teach them how Jehovah brought them out of Egyptian bondage with great signs and wonders, to give them the land he promised their forefathers. And they were to tell their sons they were to fear Jehovah so that he would preserve them. It would be righteousness for them to obey all his commandments.

Moreover, Moses commanded the priests and the elders to read the law before all Israel at the end of every seven years **"in the set time of the year of release, in the feast of tabernacles"** when they were all gathered at the chosen place. He said to them, **"Assemble the people, the men and the women and the little ones, and thy sojourner who is within thy gates, that they may hear, and that they may learn, and fear Jehovah your God, and observe to do all the words of this law, and that their sons who have not known may hear, and learn to fear Jehovah your God as long as ye live in the land where ye go over the Jordan to possess it"** (Deuteronomy 31:12-13). Since books were rare and most people were illiterate it was necessary to have those commands read to them. And it would have been very convenient to read the law to them publicly while they were all gathered together during that time. There were probably very few copies of the law available, and being sacred documents, they would have been possessed only by their officials.

OBEY THE COMMANDMENTS

Many times Jehovah commanded the sons of Israel to obey his laws. Here is one example: **"And Jehovah spoke to Moses, saying, Speak to the sons of Israel, and say to them, I am Jehovah your God. Ye shall not do after the doings of the land of Egypt, in which ye dwelt, and ye shall not do after the doings of the land of Canaan, where I bring you, nor shall ye walk in their statutes. Ye shall do my ordinances, and ye shall keep my statutes, to walk therein. I am Jehovah your God. Ye shall therefore keep my statutes, and my ordinances, which if a man does, he shall live in them. I am Jehovah"** (Leviticus 18:1-5).

Jehovah warned the sons of Israel not to walk in the ways of the Egyptians and the Canaanites, nor to observe their statutes. They were to obey his statutes and ordinances, which were obviously at odds with those of Egypt and Canaan. His ordinances were for holiness and purity, for health and productivity, for order and justice, for true righteousness.

The laws of America have changed drastically since most of the people have rejected Christ and chosen paganism. In the past most of our laws were in support of the will of God. For example, adultery, homosexuality, and even wearing seductive clothing were crimes. But now the laws are becoming more hostile to God's righteousness. I could give many examples. Criticism of things such as homosexuality and false religions is now called a "hate crime," although not yet in the legal sense in America (it is a crime in Canada and Australia, and perhaps in some other countries). Not hiring adulterers and other gross sinners, or allowing them to rent your property is called a crime of discrimination. It is a crime for public school teachers to teach anything about God or the Bible. It is now legal to be naked at some public beaches. All of those things are the opposites of what were done formerly in my country.

Three times in that short passage above God said, **"I am Jehovah."** And from that passage to the end of Leviticus those words are recorded forty-seven times. God was obviously emphasizing who he was to help them never forget; for he was their life. Indeed, without him no man can live. He is the source of all good things. And it is only by obedience to him that we can be saved for eternal life. That is why it is such wicked madness that most of the people of America are now rejecting and opposing him. Alas, it will only be in the afterlife, when it is too late to repent, that they will learn the truth. And they will find themselves cast into the outer darkness, where Jesus said, **"There will be the weeping and the gnashing of teeth"** (Matthew 8:12). Dear reader, be not caught up in their wicked madness, rejecting and opposing God, and embracing sin.

Jehovah said his people were not to be like the sinful nations of Canaan. He said, **"And ye shall not walk in the customs of the nation which I cast out before you, for they did all these things, and therefore I abhorred them"** (Leviticus 20:23). They were to be a separated people, holy to him. Notice Jehovah said he abhorred the people of those sinful nations. Beware lest God also abhor you and destroy you because of your sinfulness.

We as disciples of Christ must keep ourselves separate from the sinners of the world. Among the things Jesus said about his disciples in his prayer at the last supper was, **"I have given them thy word, and the world hated them, because they are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. I pray not that thou should take them out of the world, but that thou should keep them from the evil. They are not of the world just as I am not of the world"** (John 17:14-16).

Part 2:25

OTHER LAWS

BE HOLY

Several times Jehovah commanded his people to be holy. Here are three examples: **"Ye shall be holy, for I Jehovah your God am holy"** (Leviticus 19:2); **"Sanctify yourselves therefore, and become ye holy, for I am Jehovah your God"** (Leviticus 20:7); **"And ye shall be holy to me, for I, Jehovah, am holy, and have set you apart from the peoples, that ye should be mine"** (Leviticus 20:26). Holy things are those that are pure and undefiled in the spiritual sense. They also refer to things sanctified for Jehovah.

Here are some of the things mentioned in the Bible that were said to be holy: holy spirit, holy name, holy men, holy women, holy agents, holy people, holy brothers, holy priests, holy nation, holy land, holy place, holy mountain, holy habitation, holy Jerusalem, holy temple, holy city, holy bread, holy water, holy oil, holy crown, holy garments, holy vessels, holy offerings. But the Bible never says there is a holy war. That is a concept invented by the religion of war: Mohammedanism.

NEITHER ADD NOR DIMINISH

Jehovah gave his people these commands about the law: **"And now, O Israel, hearken to the statutes and to the ordinances, which I teach you, to do them, that ye may live, and go in and possess the land which Jehovah, the God of your fathers, gives you. Ye shall not add to the word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish from it, that ye may keep the commandments of Jehovah your God which I command you"** (Deuteronomy 4:1-2), and, **"Whatever thing I command you, that shall ye observe to do. Thou shall not add to it, nor diminish from it"** (Deuteronomy 12:32).

However, their rulers were apparently allowed to add commands of their own that were treated like statutes and ordinances. For example, the Bible says, **"And Solomon loved Jehovah, walking in the statutes of David his father"** (First Kings 3:3). An example of a statute of David is the following: **"For as his share is who goes down to the battle so shall his share be who remains by the baggage; they shall share alike. And it was so from that day forward, that he made it a statute and an ordinance for Israel to this day"** (First Samuel 30:24-25). However, such statutes and ordinances were not considered permanent laws like the ones given by Moses.

Nevertheless, Jews have added many volumes of laws to those Jehovah gave by Moses. Many of them are based upon what they call "the oral law." They claim there were many other laws given to Israel that were never written down. Supposedly they were handed down by word of mouth over the centuries. Then sometime after the time of Christ they decided to record them. The Jews have multiplied their laws far beyond what Moses gave them. Indeed, they have heaped upon themselves a vast and complex network of legalism. For example, they have added to the laws of diet given by Moses to create a whole catalog

of forbidden foods that are non-kosher for them. Their worship of legalism has had two general effects. For the minority who are serious about Judaism they are yoked with a mass of mostly trivial rules and regulations which have done nothing to improve them. For the majority, they either reject their religion altogether and base their identity upon their race, or they retain a few of the more popular laws and traditions, such as circumcision and the Passover feast (although not lawfully kept), and ignore the rest.

As an example of how ridiculous and irrational their legalistic practices have become, I will tell you of a story I recently read. I think it was on this website: www.jewishworldreview.com. The author said he was visiting a Jewish family on the day of the sabbath. When it became nightfall they all sat inside the house in the dark. So the visitor got up to turn on the light switch. That caused immediate alarm by members of the family, who rushed to prevent him. For one of the laws of Moses says, **"Ye shall kindle no fire throughout your habitations upon the sabbath day"** (Exodus 35:3). Since they consider electricity to be fire, they conclude it cannot be turned on. Consequently, they all sat in the dark because they had forgotten to turn it on before the sabbath, which begins in the evening. Nevertheless, when there was daylight that sabbath morning they asked the visitor to help them lift a heavy piece of furniture upstairs. When the visitor asked how they could do that work on the sabbath, they said that moving furniture inside was not specifically forbidden. Thus, another example of the senselessness of their legalism.

Special Hems

Jehovah commanded his people to have a visible sign they belonged to him. He said to Moses, **"Speak to the sons of Israel, and bid them that they make for them hems in the borders of their garments throughout their generations, and that they put upon the hem of each border a cord of blue"** (Numbers 15:38)**.** The thread was to be blue, and he made no distinction between men and women or adults and children. Therefore, it would have been a visible sign for everybody of their membership as citizens of Israel.

Regarding the hem, other translations say tassel or fringe instead. However, I believe the command was for a hem with a simple blue thread or cord in it. Perhaps the blue tread was what was to hold the hem in place. I do not believe Jehovah commanded them to add a decorative tassel or fringe on the edge of all their garments. Jehovah has always emphasized practicality over ornamentation except for special circumstances such as the high priest's garments for the sanctuary. Hems are eminently practical, but tassels and fringes are not. Hems are very useful to prevent thread from unraveling, and virtually all modern garments have them.

Having tassels or fringes on their everyday working garments would have invited damage and more soil to their clothing. And the extra cleaning and repair necessary to correct for that would have added to their burdens. Moreover, adding fringes or tassels to all their garments would have added a significant amount of labor and expense to them. I do not believe that is something Jehovah would have imposed upon them. Even in these days of machine manufacturing and low-cost apparel the most faithful of the Jews do not have

fringes on their garments. They know they are not practical. They now use what they call a prayer shawl with fringes as a substitute, and they claim that satisfies the command.

That special hem and blue thread would have made their clothing somewhat like a uniform. At least all the borders of their garments would have been uniform. Although hated by those with a rebellious mind, there is much value in uniforms. They contribute significantly to maintaining order. Schools that require uniform clothing are always more orderly than those that do not. Uniforms create pride in belonging for all except the rebellious.

Seeing uniformity in clothing is a continual reminder of belonging. And in fact that was the reason Jehovah gave the law. For after giving that command Jehovah said the hem would help the sons of Israel remember they all belonged to him and to obey his commandments. He said, **"And it shall be to you for a hem, that ye may look upon it, and remember all the commandments of Jehovah, and do them, and that ye not follow after your own heart and your own eyes, after which ye use to play the harlot, that ye may remember and do all my commandments, and be holy to your God. I am Jehovah your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, to be your God. I am Jehovah your God"** (Numbers 15:41). Since it was to be a national characteristic of their apparel it would have aroused the curiosity of their young children and of foreigners. And explaining its purpose would have been a continual reminder for them.

Notice Jehovah said that following after their own hearts and their own eyes was playing the harlot. Following after their own hearts and their own eyes is a common sin in the world, and is widely practiced in modern pagan America. Indeed, it is glorified as the best way to live. A popular song by a popular singer a few years ago was titled "I did it my way." That is how the devil wants us to live: forget the ways of God and do it your way, following after your own heart and your own eyes. But that way is the same as what Solomon warned about, when he said, **"There is a way which seems right to a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death"** (Proverbs 14:12).

Love Thy Neighbor

Jehovah commanded the sons of Israel against harboring hatred toward a brother. He said to them, **"Thou shall not hate thy brother in thy heart. Thou shall surely rebuke thy neighbor, and not bear sin because of him. Thou shall not ... bear any grudge against the sons of thy people"** (Leviticus 19:17-18). The word brother in that passage refers to their fellow Israelites, and not only the sons of their mother and father. Both of those commands are against harboring resentment and animosity.

Such laws are examples of commands in the law of Moses that are universal and eternal. They will never be revoked. They are associated with what Jesus said was the second greatest of the laws of Moses: **"Thou shall love thy neighbor as thyself"** (Matthew 22:39 from Leviticus 19:18). If a neighbor offends you, Jehovah said to rebuke him and not hate him. We are to confront each other with our complaints, and not bear hatred or resentment in our hearts. It is one of the most widely violated of God's commands even by Christians.

The Elderly

Another of God's laws that is widely violated these days is this one: **"Thou shall rise up before the hoary head, and honor the face of the old man, and thou shall fear thy God. I am Jehovah"** (Leviticus 19:32). There was a time in modern America when men were expected to rise at the entrance of a woman. They were also expected to remove their hats as a show of respect for the presence of a woman. I see those things much less now with women's equality. In fact many women resent any such actions by men these days. I too resented those actions, but not for the same reasons.

What God commanded was not rising before women, but rising before the aged (the hoary head). And he commanded his people to honor the face of the old man. It is ironic that the only remaining place in America I know about where that command is obeyed is in our military service. For the men are expected to rise whenever their commanding officer comes into their presence, unless that too has been forsaken during these evil times. Notice again the command to **"fear thy God."**

Make Judges and Officers

Traditionally the elders of the people were those who ruled and judged them. However, after their Exodus Moses began to judge cases for the people because he knew the laws of God. Not long before they arrived at mount Sinai Moses' father-in-law Jethro came to him. And when he saw how Moses judged the people, he said it was too burdensome. He advised a better way: **"Be thou for the people toward God, and bring thou the cases to God. And thou shall teach them the statutes and the laws, and shall show them the way in which they must walk, and the work that they must do. Moreover thou shall provide out of all the people able men, such as fear God, men of truth, hating unjust gain, and place such over them, to be rulers of thousands, rulers of hundreds, rulers of fifties, and rulers of tens, and let them judge the people at all seasons. And it shall be, that every great matter they shall bring to thee, but every small matter they shall judge themselves. So shall it be easier for thyself, and they shall bear *the burden* with thee. If thou shall do this thing, and God command thee so, then thou shall be able to endure, and all this people also shall go to their place in peace"** (18:17-23).

Notice that last sentence, which begins, **"If thou shall do this thing, and God command thee so ... ."** Since Moses applied what Jethro advised, God must have commanded him so. Jethro said Moses should keep his role as mediator between God and the people, but he should teach the people the statutes and the laws, and show them the way they must walk and the work they must do. Then he advised selecting able men who were righteous, and organizing them into a hierarchy of rulers, with Moses judging only the great matters.

That hierarchical system of rulers he recommended is very similar to the organizational leadership of a typical modern army, which works very well. Actually, the sons of Israel were an army on their way to invade the promised land. Indeed, Jehovah referred to their tribes as his armies, and they were often called armies in various passages of the Bible about their time in the wilderness. The extent to which that system of rulers remained after they

settled in their promised land is not known. Since they were divided into the various tribal territories each tribe probably established its own system of judges and rulers.

Actually, the government of Israel was to be very simple. Their country was to be a theocracy with Jehovah as their king. And he used his agents and prophets to communicate with them. They had no need for legislators, for Moses had been their lawgiver. After they settled in their promised land they initially had one chief man to judge and advise them (one of those judges was a woman). Thus, they had a lot of freedom, as the record says: **"In those days there was no king in Israel. Every man did that which was right in his own eyes"** (Judges 17:6). That did not mean they were lawless. It simply meant they were free from the dictates of a central government. However, they eventually asked God to set an earthly king over them. Consequently, they lost much of their freedom to their kings, many of whom were unrighteous men. Their various administrators had traditionally been the local elder men among them.

The law commanded judges and officers be made in all their gates, meaning in all their walled cities. Their walled cities were larger population centers with the greater need for some kind of management. The command says, **"Thou shall make judges and officers for thee in all thy gates, which Jehovah thy God gives thee, according to thy tribes, and they shall judge the people with righteous judgment"** (Deuteronomy 16:18). Those men were apparently chosen primarily by and from the elders. However, they probably also included Levites. For in the command about unsolved murders, the text says, **"And the priests the sons of Levi shall come near, for Jehovah thy God has chosen them to minister to him, and to bless in the name of Jehovah, and according to their word shall every controversy and every stroke be"** (Deuteronomy 21:5). The priests apparently had authority over every judgment.

Jehovah also established something like a supreme court for them. The law says, **"If there arise a matter too hard for thee in judgment, between blood and blood, between plea and plea, and between stroke and stroke, being matters of controversy within thy gates, then thou shall arise, and get thee up to the place which Jehovah thy God shall choose. And thou shall come to the priests the Levites, and to the judge who shall be in those days, and thou shall inquire. And they shall show thee the sentence of judgment"** (Deuteronomy 17:8-9). Jehovah commanded them to accept the decision made by the priest and the judge at the chosen place. He said they were not to alter it in any way. And any man who refused to hearken to the judgment of the priest or the judge was to be put to death. And again he said if they did that the people would hear and fear, and would **"do no more presumptuously"** (Deuteronomy 17:13).

PROPHETS

Moses prophesied about the coming of Christ. He told the sons of Israel that God would raise up a prophet among them like him. In other words, that prophet would be a law-giver. Peter quoted Moses' prophecy and applied it to Jesus when he preached to the Jews after Jesus' resurrection (see Acts 3:23).

Here is what Moses said about that prophet: **"Jehovah thy God will raise up for thee a prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brothers, like me. Ye shall hearken to him, according to all that thou desired of Jehovah thy God in Horeb in the day of the assembly, saying, Let me not hear again the voice of Jehovah my God, neither let me see this great fire any more, that I not die. And Jehovah said to me, They have well said that which they have spoken. I will raise up a prophet for them from among their brothers, like thee. And I will put my words in his mouth, and he shall speak to them all that I shall command him. And it shall come to pass, that whoever will not hearken to my words which he shall speak in my name, I will require it of him"** (Deuteronomy 18:17-19).

Jehovah also told them how they could identify a false prophet who spoke in his name. After telling them of that future prophet like Moses who would give them new commandments, Jehovah said, **"But the prophet, who shall speak a word presumptuously in my name, which I have not commanded him to speak, or who shall speak in the name of other gods, that same prophet shall die. And if thou say in thy heart, How shall we know the word which Jehovah has not spoken?**

"When a prophet speaks in the name of Jehovah, if the thing does not follow, nor come to pass, that is the thing which Jehovah has not spoken. The prophet has spoken it presumptuously. Thou shall not be afraid of him" (Deuteronomy 18:20-22). In other words, if a man who claimed to be a prophet ever predicted anything that did not come to pass, he was a false prophet.

Nevertheless, Jehovah also warned them about a false prophet whose predictions might come to pass. He said, **"If there arise in the midst of thee a prophet, or a dreamer of dreams, and he gives thee a sign or a wonder, and the sign or the wonder comes to pass, of which he spoke to thee, saying, Let us go after other gods, which thou have not known, and let us serve them, thou shall not hearken to the words of that prophet, or to that dreamer of dreams, for Jehovah your God proves you, to know whether ye love Jehovah your God with all your heart and with all your soul. Ye shall walk after Jehovah your God, and fear him, and keep his commandments, and obey his voice, and ye shall serve him, and cling to him.**

"And that prophet, or that dreamer of dreams, shall be put to death, because he has spoken rebellion against Jehovah your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, and redeemed thee out of the house of bondage, to draw thee aside out of the way which Jehovah thy God commanded thee to walk in. So shall thou put away the evil from the midst of thee" (Deuteronomy 13:1-5).

It is very easy to predict future events by chance. For the laws of probability will make many guesses correct. However, it is impossible to make all predictions accurate by chance alone. Therefore, a few correct predictions were not to be sufficent to prove the authenticity of a prophet of God. Moreover, regardless of the accuracy of a prophet's predictions, if he spoke rebellion against Jehovah he was to be put to death.

Setting Up a King

Moses said to the people, **"When thou have come to the land which Jehovah thy God gives thee, and shall possess it, and shall dwell in it, and shall say, I will set a king over me like all the nations that are round about me, thou shall surely set him king over thee whom Jehovah thy God shall choose"** (Deuteronomy 17:14-15). God knew the time would come when they would want to be like the nations around them and set a king over them. Therefore, he established some rules about a king.

Their king was to be a son of Israel and not a foreigner. He was not to multiply horses for himself nor cause the people to go to Egypt for them. He was not to multiply wives for himself, and he was not to greatly multiply to himself silver and gold. Solomon violated all three of those restrictions. The king was also to write for himself a copy of the law, and he was to read it all the days of his life. That was, first, for him to learn to fear Jehovah; second, to obey his laws; third, that he not become proud over this brothers the sons of Israel; and fourth, that he not deviate from the law.

Jehovah did allow the sons of Israel to follow the nations around them and set up a king, but like divorce he did not approve of it. And when they first urged the prophet Samuel to request Jehovah for a king, God warned how costly one would be. Therefore, Samuel said to them, **"This will be the manner of the king who shall reign over you: He will take your sons, and appoint them to him for his chariots, and to be his horsemen, and they shall run before his chariots. And he will appoint them to him for captains of thousands, and captains of fifties. And *he will set some* to plow his ground, and to reap his harvest, and to make his instruments of war, and the instruments of his chariots. And he will take your daughters to be perfumers, and to be cooks, and to be bakers.**

"And he will take your fields, and your vineyards, and your oliveyards, even the best of them, and give them to his servants. And he will take the tenth of your seed, and of your vineyards, and give to his officers, and to his servants. And he will take your men-servants, and your maid-servants, and your finest young men, and your donkeys, and put them to his work. He will take the tenth of your flocks. And ye shall be his servants. And ye shall cry out in that day because of your king whom ye shall have chosen you, and Jehovah will not answer you in that day" (First Samuel 8:11-18).

When Americans decided they wanted to be a pagan nation, they clamored for a strong socialist central government. Like the ancient Israelites, they wanted the government to provide for them. And now our rulers take almost half of our income, and they continually add more rules and regulations to what we can and cannot do. The people are now servants (albeit indirectly) of their rulers and of all manner of welfare recipients. The people often cry out about their taxes and their restrictions, but there is little they can do.

When Daughters Could Inherit

In the sight of God women are a subservient class. God created them for men, as Paul said, **"For man is not from woman, but woman from man. For also man was not created for**

the woman, but woman for the man" (First Corinthians 11:8-9). And Peter said, **"For this way formerly also, the holy women, trusting in God, adorned themselves, being subordinate to their own husbands, as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord, whose children ye became, doing good, and not being afraid of anything fearful"** (First Peter 3:5-6). That is the word of God, but it is heresy to this pagan generation.

In the law of Moses men were to receive the inheritance of their fathers. Women shared a man's inheritance (though not equally) when they married. Any righteous man loves his children and treats them well. Men were to treat their wives even better. For God commanded children to honor both their father and their mother. Since sons alone were to inherit from their fathers, what would happen if a man had no sons? That question was posed to Moses by the daughters of Zelophehad because he had no sons. Therefore, Jehovah said when a man had no sons his daughters were to receive the inheritance. And if he had no children at all, then the next of kin was to receive it. And he made that a statute and ordinance. Later some men came to Moses about a problem if daughters inherited land. They said if such daughters married outside their tribe, the land would be lost to it. Therefore, Jehovah commanded such daughters to marry only in their own tribe.

The Two Trumpets

Jehovah told Moses to command the people to make two silver trumpets to be used for signaling. The priests, the sons of Aaron, were the men to blow the trumpets. When both were blown the congregation was to gather at the door of the tent of meeting. When one was blown the rulers and heads of thousands were to gather to him. They were to be used to announce the beginning of a journey, one sound for the east side to depart, and the second sound for the south side to depart. The trumpets were also to be used to sound an alarm for war. They were also to be used at other times: **"Also in the day of your gladness, and in your set feasts, and in the beginnings of your months, ye shall blow the trumpets over your burnt offerings, and over the sacrifices of your peace offerings. And they shall be to you for a memorial before your God: I am Jehovah your God"** (Numbers 10:2-10).

The sons of Israel determined their months according to the lunar cycle. When to begin a new month was not based upon observation alone. Determining when to begin a new month was complicated by the fact the lunar cycles are not synchronized with the solar cycle. And adjustments were made to coordinate things such as certain dates with certain days of the week. Therefore the trumpets were used to announce when it was officially decided to begin the new month or the time of a set feast.

Taking a Census

For some reason a law about taking a census was added amongst all the laws about the tabernacle and the garments of the priests. The law required each man to **"ransom his soul to Jehovah"** whenever a census was taken. Otherwise there would be a plague among them. The ransom was half a shekel for every soul from twenty years old and upward. The money was to be given as an offering to Jehovah to make atonement for their souls. And it was to be used for the service of the tent of meeting. Centuries later, provoked by accusations of

Satan (against Israel), God tested his people by causing king David to take a census. And because the people failed to pay the half shekel, God sent a plague against them (see Second Samuel 24 and First Chronicles 21). David blamed himself, but God punished the people for their guilt.

MIXING THINGS

There are two places in the law with commands about mixing things. One which is in Leviticus says, **"Thou shall not let thy cattle engender with a diverse kind. Thou shall not sow thy field with two kinds of seed, neither shall there come upon thee a garment of two kinds of stuff mingled together"** (Leviticus 19:19). The other is in Deuteronomy, and it says, **"Thou shall not sow thy vineyard with two kinds of seed, lest the whole fruit be forfeited: the seed which thou have sown, and the increase of the vineyard. Thou shall not plow with an ox and a donkey together. Thou shall not wear a mingled stuff, wool and linen together"** (Deuteronomy 22:9-11). The reasons for all those restrictions has been debated. I suspect the main purpose of them was the same as for those about our body appearance. Namely, that God did not want his people engaged in anything that would be unprofitable and perverse.

Regarding the matter of engendering with diverse cattle (livestock), mules were used during the time of David and Solomon. Mules are the product of mating horses with donkeys. Mules are almost always sterile, but they make good work animals. The mule is the only fairly practical example of crossbreeding with animals that I know about. Horses and donkeys must not have been considered a diverse kind according to the law.

The command about not sowing their field with two different kinds of seed was probably given for the same reasons. Namely, to keep them from doing things unproductive and perverse. It would certainly make harvesting much more difficult if every other plant was of a different kind. I have seen many fields of commercial crops, but none with mixed kinds.

The command about the different materials of a garment was probably given because of different rates of shrinking, which would cause tearing when washed. And although that was no doubt widely known, the law was probably given to discourage unscrupulous men from peddling garments so made. The KJV translates that passage in Leviticus to say "linen and woollen," instead of "two kinds of stuff."

WHIPPINGS

Corporal punishment has historically been an effective means of punishment. And it is still used effectively and judiciously in some countries. However, during these modern times humanists in their arrogant self-righteousness have declared corporal punishment to be cruel and uncivilized. And they have waged a very successful war against it. Corporal punishment is now outlawed for adults in many countries including my own. And corporal punishment for children has been so disabled with restrictions that it is virtually outlawed. Like gun control, when the enemies of something cannot outlaw it altogether, they multiply restrictive rules and regulations that have about the same effect.

Nevertheless, God gave provision in the law of Moses to use corporal punishment for adults as well as for children. However, God wanted no abuse of that punishment. The enemies of corporal punishment in America use much propaganda, especially in the entertainment business, to portray corporal punishment as savage and brutal. They display fictitious pictures of men beaten down and their bodies bloodied when whipped. And they teach the idea that is what all whipping is like.

In contrast to that deceitful propaganda, the law of Moses outlawed not whipping itself, but the abuse of it. Here is what Jehovah said: **"If there be a controversy between men, and they come to judgment, and *they* judge them, then they shall justify the righteous, and condemn the iniquitous. And it shall be, if the iniquitous man is deserving to be beaten, that the judge shall cause him to lie down, and to be beaten before his face, according to his iniquity, by number. He may give him forty stripes. He shall not exceed, lest, if he should exceed, and beat him above these with many stripes, then thy brother should seem debased to thee"** (Deuteronomy 25:1-3). Notice God wanted them to avoid making the impression that the punished man was debased by being whipped. Therefore, he limited how many stripes they could give. And it is obvious the kind of stripes permissible did not involve a brutal beating or any kind of body injury. By the time of the New Testament a tradition had developed to limit the number of stripes to thirty-nine. The reason being to prevent accidentally going over the forty.

There are many things that could be effectively punished by whipping. Americans rely almost exclusively on collecting money from fines (which is kept by the rulers) and jail time for punishment. Occasionally someone is put to death. Nobody is ever whipped. Yet a few moments experiencing the pain of being whipped is far more just and merciful than locking a man away in some savage prison, or depriving him of his often hard earned money. Moreover, it is a much more effective way to discourage petty crime. And it avoids exposing the violator to association with hardened criminals in our modern jails and prisons.

Sinning with a High Hand

God allowed his people to atone for unwitting sins or occasional lesser sins. However, Jehovah also said, **"But the soul that does anything with a high hand, whether he be home-born or a sojourner, the same blasphemes Jehovah, and that soul shall be cut off from among his people. Because he has despised the word of Jehovah, and has broken his commandment, that soul shall utterly be cut off; his iniquity shall be upon him"** (Numbers 15:30-31). The KJV says "presumptuously" instead of "a high hand." Other versions use the word "defiantly." The general meaning seems to refer to a headstrong man who sins proudly and willfully. The passage is probably about a lawless man—a habitual sinner—and not about those who might commit an occasional sin willfully.

The expression "cut off" almost certainly meant the death penalty. In this case Jehovah underscored that penalty by saying the man was to be "utterly cut off." The expression "cut off" is used many times in the Bible, well over two hundred. However, the expression "utterly cut off" is used rarely. Commanding such men be utterly cut off shows that Jehovah

wanted absolutely no tolerance for habitually lawless men. These words of Jeremiah apply to them: **"Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? Then ye also may do good, who are accustomed to do evil"** (Jeremiah 13:23).

God wants even wicked men to repent (see Ezekiel 18), but when they become so hardened that repentance is impossible, that makes them unfit to live. And their continual lawlessness (acting with a high hand) will show that. Their execution will not only remove their burden from the innocent, but knowledge of their execution will have a powerful deterrent effect for others who might be tempted to sin with a high hand.

I have read accounts by criminal experts who said that the great majority of crimes are committed by a relatively small number of habitual criminals. If they were permanently eliminated the crime rate would drop significantly, as well as the heavy costs paid by their victims and by law abiding taxpayers. God said, **"… his iniquity shall be upon him."** In other words such a man deserves that kind of punishment. But modern Americans are deluded about true justice, and too morally weak themselves to demand proper punishment.

SORCERY

At six different places in the books of the law Jehovah commanded against sorcery. And he made it a capital offense. In one place he said, **"A man or also a woman who has a familiar spirit, or that is a wizard, shall surely be put to death. They shall stone them with stones; their blood shall be upon them"** (Leviticus 20:27). In another place he said, **"When thou have come into the land, which Jehovah thy God gives thee, thou shall not learn to do according to the abominations of those nations. There shall not be found with thee ... a psychic, he who practices augury, or an enchanter, or a sorcerer, or a charmer, or a medium, or a spiritist, or a necromancer. For whoever does these things is an abomination to Jehovah. ... For these nations, that thou shall dispossess, hearken to those who practice augury, and to psychics. But as for thee, Jehovah thy God has not allowed thee to do so"** (Deuteronomy 18:9-14).

All those things refer to claims of supernatural power or knowledge. Having a familiar spirit was supposed to mean power to communicate with the dead. Modern fortune tellers, mediums, psychics, and astrologers make the similar claims. No man has ever had supernatural power or mystical knowledge that was not given to him by Jehovah. And Jehovah only gave those things to his prophets. Hence, every other man who claims such powers or knowledge is a fraud. Jehovah said his people would be defiled by men who did such things. Although the text does not say directly, it is obvious the people would be misled and seduced away from dependence upon God by those frauds.

God made one exception when he allowed a woman who claimed to have a familiar spirit to actually communicate with the dead. King Saul went to her in a time of distress, and he asked her to bring up the prophet Samuel. She did not know he was the king. When Samuel actually came up, the record says, **"And when the woman saw Samuel, she cried with a loud voice. And the woman spoke to Saul, saying, Why have thou deceived me? For**

thou are Saul" (First Samuel 28:12). The woman was shocked to see Samuel, because she knew she did not have the power to bring him up. All such persons are skilled illusionists.

Refused Entry

Part of the law of Moses includes commands to restrict certain persons from entering into the assembly of Jehovah. Here is the first of those commands: **"He who is wounded in the testicles, or has his private part cut off, shall not enter into the assembly of Jehovah. A bastard shall not enter into the assembly of Jehovah, even to the tenth generation none of his shall enter into the assembly of Jehovah"** (Deuteronomy 23:1-2).

Next Moses named certain ethnic groups that could not enter the assembly of Jehovah. The first were the Ammonites and the Moabites: **"An Ammonite or a Moabite shall not enter into the assembly of Jehovah, even to the tenth generation none belonging to them shall enter into the assembly of Jehovah forever"** (Deuteronomy 23:3). Moses then gave the reason why they were to be refused entry. He said it was **"because they met you not with bread and with water on the way, when ye came forth out of Egypt, and because they hired against thee Balaam the son of Beor from Pethor of Mesopotamia, to curse thee. Nevertheless Jehovah thy God would not hearken to Balaam, but Jehovah thy God turned the curse into a blessing to thee, because Jehovah thy God loved thee. Thou shall not seek their peace nor their prosperity all thy days forever"** (Deuteronomy 23:4-6). Finally he spoke of the Edomites and the Egyptians. He said, **"Thou shall not abhor an Edomite, for he is thy brother. Thou shall not abhor an Egyptian, because thou were a sojourner in his land. The sons of the third generation who are born to them shall enter into the assembly of Jehovah"** (Deuteronomy 23:7-8).

What makes those commands difficult to understand is what he meant by the assembly of Jehovah. I have yet to read of an explanation that I consider satisfactory. Some commentaries, old and new, say the restrictions were about rulers. However, the scriptures neither say nor imply that. Some think it means their sacred assemblies, but if that were true why does it not say so? The references in the Bible that use the expression "the assembly of Jehovah" always refer to the entire population of the sons of Israel. And the above restrictions were about entering into the assembly of Jehovah. Those things suggest to me the restrictions were about souls becoming citizens of Israel. Entering into the assembly of Jehovah probably meant becoming a citizen.

Whatever it means there are some important lessons for us in those laws. First, there were some classes of people that Jehovah said should be rejected. Second, all of those classes of people deserved being rejected, even if they were not personally guilty. No bastard ever had a choice in becoming one. Yet they must bear the stigma in order to discourage sexual intimacy outside of marriage. When there is no stigma to being a bastard, and babies can be legally killed, then fornication becomes rampant, as in this generation of Americans. It has become so bad that a girl who remains a virgin is often mocked and sneered because of it.

The offspring of bastards to the tenth generation were to be rejected. How that was determined is not told. Typically, birth is considered the time a person becomes an official citi-

zen. And bastards born in Israel were probably not to be allowed citizenship at birth (entry into the assembly of Jehovah). Genealogical records were very important to the Israelites. Therefore, they could document ten generations of offspring from a bastard. How that could be determined for foreigners is not known. Perhaps all foreigners who sought citizenship were required to bring documentation of their genealogy.

The only questionable group were the men with damaged sex organs. Why those men were also rejected is not clear. Of all the groups they were permanently excluded. That suggests those injuries were punishment for some kind of evil behavior. Perhaps they were habitual sex offenders, and that was how they were controlled. If that were the case, then they deserved to be excluded permanently. Of course, the actual reason is not told.

REMEMBER AMALEK

Jehovah, through Moses, gave the sons of Israel a command about the Amalekites. He said they were to blot out the remembrance of them from under heaven. And he told them not to forget that command. Several centuries later God commanded king Saul to exterminate the Amalekites. That command was similar to his command to exterminate the peoples of their promised land. He said, **"Remember what Amalek did to thee by the way as ye came forth out of Egypt, how he met thee by the way, and smote the hindmost of thee, all who were feeble behind thee, when thou were faint and weary, and he feared not God. Therefore it shall be, when Jehovah thy God has given thee rest from all thine enemies round about, in the land which Jehovah thy God gives thee for an inheritance to possess it, that thou shall blot out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven. Thou shall not forget"** (Deuteronomy 25:17-19).

Modern men condemn such commands. They have invented and popularized the use of a word called genocide, which they automatically classify as a great evil. Hence, they condemn God for committing what they say is "crimes against humanity" by having commanded "genocide." These words of Jehovah describe them: **"I have spread out my hands all the day to a disobedient and rebellious people, who walk in a way that is not good, according to their own thoughts, a people who provoke me to my face continually ... who say, Stand by thyself, do not come near to me, for I am holier than thou. These are a smoke in my nose, a fire that burns all the day"** (Isaiah 65:2-5).

Such men are evil hypocrites and disciples of the devil. Those who condemn God for "genocide" love evil, because they want to keep wicked men like those of Sodom and Gomorrah alive. The fact is, life for innocent souls living among wickedness is worse than death, especially for children whose lives are corrupted. Indeed, the prophet Isaiah said, **"The righteous man perishes, and no man lays it to heart. And merciful men are taken away; none considering that the righteous man is taken away from the evil. He enters into peace. They rest in their beds, each one who walks in his uprightness"** (Isaiah 57:1-2). What Isaiah meant was that physical death (resting in their beds) was better for righteous men who had been living among great wickedness. Consider what Paul said about himself: **"And I am constrained by the two, having the desire to depart** [physical death]

and be with Christ, being far better. But to remain in the flesh is more necessary because of you" (Philippians 1:23-24). We who are faithful Christians weep when our loved ones depart in death. It is because we miss them, not because their souls have perished.

It is just as right to sometimes command "genocide" as it is to command the extermination of anything harmful. And all who strive to protect and defend evil things, people included, contribute to the growth of sorrow and suffering among us. It is folly when police are taught to risk their lives to save a wicked man. It is a value promoted by wicked men. Evil is infectious, and sometimes the only solution is complete eradication, including the extermination of very corrupt societies. Of course, such a drastic response against a whole society should be done as a last resort, as God himself did. It should be reserved for those who are incurably corrupt, such as the antediluvian world, the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah, and the nation of Amalek. See the book of Jonah for an example of how a great but sinful city was spared destruction because its people repented at the warning of the prophet Jonah who was sent by God.

VENGEANCE

When God commanded his people not to hate their brothers or bear a grudge against them, he also said, **"Thou shall not take vengeance ..."** (Leviticus 19:18). In another place God said, **"Vengeance is for me"** (Deuteronomy 32:35). Paul quoted that passage when he wrote to his brothers in Roman: **"If possible from you, keeping peace with all men, not avenging yourselves, beloved, but give place to wrath, for it is written, Vengeance is for me, I will repay, says the Lord"** (Romans 12:18-19). We are not to avenge ourselves, but God wants vengeance done. Indeed after Paul gave those instructions to his Roman brothers not to avenge themselves, he told them to be subject to their rulers, who were to take vengeance. He said, **"For rulers are not a source of fear to the good works, but to the evil. And do thou desire not to fear the office of authority? Do what is good, and thou will have praise from it. For he is a helper of God to thee for what is good. But if thou do what is evil, be afraid, for he does not bear the sword in vain. For he is a helper of God, vengeful for wrath to the man who commits evil"** (Romans 13:3-4). Those authorities are instruments by which Jehovah takes vengeance.

It is not wrong for us to desire vengeance, for vengeance is justice. When John wrote about his vision of heaven, he said, **"I saw underneath the altar the souls of those who had been killed because of the word of God, and because of the testimony of the Lamb that they held. And they cried out in a great voice, saying, Master, Holy and True, how long do thou not judge and avenge our blood from those who dwell on the earth? And a white robe was given to them each, and it was said to them that they should still rest a time, until also their fellow bondmen, and their brothers, and those going to be killed as they too, would be fulfilled"** (Revelation 6:9-11). The martyred souls in heaven cried out for vengeance, and they were not criticized for it. Those who hate vengeance hate justice; for vengeance is justice.

JUSTICE

There are numerous places in the law that tell how Jehovah is a God of justice. The song of Moses says, **"The Rock, his work is perfect, for all his ways are justice, a God of faithfulness and without iniquity, just and right is he"** (Deuteronomy 32:4). In the law God commanded justice. For example, he said, **"Thou shall not follow a multitude to do evil, neither shall thou speak in a case to turn aside after a multitude to distort *justice*, neither shall thou favor a poor man in his case"** (Exodus 23:2-3). Another passage says, **"Ye shall do no unrighteousness in judgment. Thou shall not respect the person of the poor man, nor honor the person of the mighty man, but thou shall judge thy neighbor in righteousness"** (Leviticus 19:15).

The Bible is filled with examples of God's justice, and his admonitions for men to be just. For we are all going to face his justice at the great day of judgment, as this description of it says: **"And I saw a great white throne, and him who sits upon it, from whose face the earth and the sky fled away, and no place was found for them. And I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne, and books were opened, and another book was opened, which is the one of life. And the dead were judged from the things that were written in the books, according to their works"** (Revelation 20:11-12). Remember, justice is the application of God's law, and God's law is what this book is about.

Part 2:26

Blessings and Curses

There are no laws discussed in this Part. I included this material to show how significant were the consequences of their obedience to God's laws. The blessings would come if they were obedient to him, and the curses would come if they were disobedient. They were all contingent upon how the people behaved. There was no nonsense about Jehovah having unconditional love for them.The blessings that Jehovah said he would bestow upon his people for their obedience were many and great. The curses that would come upon them for disobedience were severe and even more numerous than the blessings.

These things are very important lessons for all of us. For the blessings and the curses associated with accepting Christ or rejecting him far outweigh, beyond measure, all that is said about what the sons of Israel would receive. Remember that as you read about these blessings and curses, and do not harden your heart to your eternal regret.

For the First Generation

The book of Leviticus tells how Jehovah described, to that first generation whom he brought out of Egypt, a blessing and a curse. He first gave a list of all the blessings they would receive for their obedience.

The blessings

- Jehovah would give their rains in their season.
- The land would yield its increase.
- The trees of the field would yield their fruit.
- Their threshing would reach to the vintage.
- The vintage would reach the time of sowing.
- They would eat their bread to the full.
- They would dwell in their land safely.
- He would give peace in the land.
- They would lie down and none would make them afraid.
- He would cause the evil beasts to cease from the land.
- The sword would not go through their land.
- They would chase their enemies, who would fall before them by the sword.
- Five of them would chase a hundred, and a hundred would chase ten thousand, and their enemies would fall before them by the sword.
- Jehovah would have respect to them.
- He would make them fruitful.
- He would multiply them.
- He would establish his covenant with them.
- They would eat old storage long kept, and would bring forth the old because of the new.
- He would set up his tabernacle among them.

- He would not abhor them.
- He would walk among them and be their God.
- They would be his people.

Jehovah also reminded them he had already broken the bars of their yoke in Egypt, and made them go upright. When Jehovah said he would have respect to them, it would not be because of their race, but because of their righteousness. And God will have respect to any people that lives in righteousness. When God sent Peter to preach Christ to the first Gentile, he saw the Holy Spirit descend upon them. Peter then said, **"In truth, I am overwhelmed that God is not partial, but in every nation, he who fears him, and works righteousness, is acceptable to him"** (Acts 10:34-35). The enormous blessings that Americans have enjoyed have come from our righteousness before God, and our sins have been our reproach. For remember, Solomon said, **"Righteousness exalts a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people"** (Proverbs 14:34).

The curses

The list of God's curses against his people for disobedience is almost four times longer than the list of his blessings. Jehovah described these things that would bring his curses:

- If they would not hearken to him.
- If they would not do all his commandments.
- If they would reject his statutes.
- If their soul abhorred his ordinances so that they would be disobedient.
- If they broke his covenant.

Most Americans of this pagan generation have now done all those things. The reason God has spared my country from great grief is because there are yet many righteous souls here who love him and who want to obey him. Paul spoke of the longsuffering of God when he said, "**And if God, wanting to show his wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much longsuffering vessels of wrath prepared for destruction, even that he might make known the wealth of his glory upon vessels of mercy, which he previously prepared for glory, namely us whom he called, not only from Jews but also from Gentiles"** (Romans 9:22-24). And God was not quick to bring the curses against his people Israel.

God even told Abraham he would spare Sodom and Gomorrah if he could find ten righteous souls there. It is to spare the vessels of mercy (those who love truth and righteousness) that God is enduring with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath (unrepentant sinners who abhor his will).

If his people Israel forsook him Jehovah said these things would happen to them:

- He would appoint terror over them, even consumption and fever that would consume their eyes and make their soul pine away.
- They would sow their seed in vain, for their enemies would eat it.
- Jehovah would set his face against them.
- They would be smitten before their enemies.

- Those who hate them would rule over them.
- They would flee when no man pursued them.

Those curses were just the beginning of the bitter consequences of their disobedience. For God went on to state even more curses. But first Jehovah said, **"... if for these things ye will not yet hearken to me … ."** God would not afflict them with all his curses at once. He was going to give them a chance to repent after experiencing some of them. Jehovah was going to punish them in stages, each time giving them an opportunity to repent. Here are the curses of the second stage:

- He would chastise them seven times more for their sins.
- He would break the pride of their power.
- He would make their sky as iron, and their earth as brass.
- Their strength would be spent in vain, for their land would not yield its increase, nor would the trees of the land yield their fruit.

Jehovah said he would chastise them seven times more for their sins. Seven is often used in the Bible as a figurative number for completeness. Hence, he was emphasizing how severely they would be punished.

He said next that if they walked contrary to him, and would not hearken to him, he would bring seven times more plagues upon them. This time he said he would bring the beast of the field among them, which would (1) rob them of their sons, (2) destroy their cattle, (3) make them few in number, and (4) make their ways become desolate. What he meant by the beast of the field is not clear. Perhaps he meant all the wild destructive creatures of the land collectively, from germs to insects to larger animals. Perhaps the curse even included criminals and foreign armies.

And again Jehovah said, **"... if by these things ye will not be reformed to me, but will walk contrary to me … ."** Jehovah said that after punishing them with afflictions he would wait to see their response. And if they did not repent, but continued to oppose him, he would add more afflictions to them. He was going to give them many opportunities to turn away from their sinfulness and return to him. If they did not, then they would experience these curses:

- He would walk contrary to them in wrath.
- He would smite them seven times for their sins.
- He would bring a sword upon them to execute the vengeance of the covenant.
- He would send the pestilence among them as they huddled together in their cities.
- They would be delivered into the hand of the enemy.
- He would break the staff of bread, so that ten women would bake it for them by weight, but they would not be satisfied.

And again Jehovah said, **"... if for all this ye will not hearken to me, but walk contrary to me ..."** he would add these curses against them:

- He would walk against them in wrath.
- He would chastise them seven times for their sins.

- They would eat the flesh of their sons and their daughters.
- He would destroy their high places (of idol worship), and cut down their sun-images.
- He would cast their dead bodies upon the bodies of their idols.
- His soul would abhor them.
- He would make their cities a waste.
- He would bring their sanctuaries to desolation.
- He would not smell the savor of their sweet odors (of their offerings).
- He would bring the land into desolation.
- Their enemies who dwell in it would be astonished at it.
- He would scatter them among the nations.
- Their land would be a desolation and their cities a waste.

If they did not give the land its sabbaths (every seventh year as he had commanded), then Jehovah would impose the sabbaths himself by destroying their nation, and exiling them to the lands of their enemies.

Then he described the last of the curses that he would bring upon them for their sinfulness, if they refused to repent. He said,

- The remnant of them would be in the lands of their enemies.
- And he would send a faintness into their heart.
- The sound of a driven leaf would chase them, and they would flee as a man flees from the sword.
- They would fall when no man pursued them.
- They would stumble upon each other, as before the sword, when no man pursued.
- They would have no power to stand before their enemies.
- They would perish among the nations.
- The land of their enemies would eat them up.
- The remnant of them would pine away in the iniquity of their enemy's lands.
- And in the iniquities of their fathers they would pine away with them.

That is a long list of terrible curses that God said would come upon their nation for disobedience. And alas, they all happened. Many times they cycled from sinfulness to repentance after God punished them. Yet in the last centuries they became progressively worse. And after about a thousand years in their promised land, they became so spiritually corrupt that their nation was completely destroyed, including all their cities. The small remnant of survivors were scattered abroad, and they were persecuted and treated with contempt in the foreign nations where they dwelt. Jehovah tried for a long time in many ways to save them, but they were stubborn and rebellious.

God urged his people to obey him, and he listed many blessings they would enjoy when they did. He also warned his people about what would happen to them if they sinned against him. Those words of encouragement and warning were not given for the sons of Israel only, but for all mankind. What nation has lived in wickedness and prospered very long? Some wicked nations have indeed grown powerful and rich, but how long did they last that way? In my own lifetime I have seen it happen to more than one nation. Nazi Ger-

many and imperial Japan are examples. And more recently was the Soviet Union, which former President Reagan said correctly was an evil empire. They continually mocked God and lived crookedly. Moreover, the Bible tells how God sometimes elevated wicked nations to great power for a time to use them to punish other nations. For example, Jehovah said of Assyria, **"Have thou not heard how I have done it long ago, and formed it of ancient times? Now I have brought it to pass, that thou should be to lay waste fortified cities into ruinous heaps. Therefore their inhabitants were of small power, they were dismayed and confounded. They were as the grass of the field, and as the green herb, as the grass on the housetops, and as grain blasted before it is grown up"** (Second Kings 19:25-26).

The final punishment of the sons of Israel for walking contrary to God would be the destruction of their nation and the scattering of the remnant of their citizens. Yet Jehovah said he would remember his covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, which meant he would restore the land to them. But only when they confessed their guilt, humbled their heart, and accepted the punishment of their iniquity. Confession and repentance are always required for God's forgiveness. Jehovah said the land would enjoy its sabbaths while they were exiled from it. And he reminded them again the reason for that punishment was because they rejected his ordinances, and their soul abhorred his statutes.

Nevertheless, as Jehovah foretold the terrible curses they would suffer when they rejected him, he also spoke words of encouragement with his promise not to reject them or abhor them to destroy them utterly. For their sakes he would remember the covenant of their ancestors, whom he brought out of Egypt. He spoke those words a thousand years before all those things actually happened, but as Peter said, **"... one day with the Lord is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day"** (Second Peter 3:8).

None of those things were foreordained. Only the consequences of their deeds were foreordained. The blessings for obedience, and the curses for disobedience were all contingent upon how they lived. And for each one of us, whether we are destined for heaven or hell, depends upon how each of us lives. Whether I live righteously in the sight of God or unrighteously is determined by me. If I live righteously I am destined for an eternal reward in heaven with God, but if I live unrighteously I am destined for eternal punishment. Those things are more certain than the sun rising each day. For that is the promise of God, and he never breaks his promises.

Dear reader who loves God, let not scoffers discourage you or cause you to doubt his promises. Remember how the serpent caused Eve to doubt God's word, and what happened when she did. Remain faithful and obedient to him, and rejoice for the hope he has given us. Let scoffers and other men who hate God still live unrighteously, because that guarantees their eternal damnation. For our Savior said to John from heaven, **"Let the man doing wrong still do wrong, and let the filthy man still be filthy. And let the righteous man still do righteousness, and let the holy man still be holy. Behold, I come quickly, and my reward is with me to render to each man as his work will be"** (Revelation 22:11-12).

The Second Generation

The first generation of Israelites whom God brought out of Egypt were cursed to die in the wilderness because of their continual rebellion (all but Joshua and Caleb). Forty years after the Exodus the children of that first generation were grown and ready to invade the promised land.

Uttering a blessing and a curse

Moses told the second generation that after they crossed the Jordan river they were to stand on two mountains and utter aloud a blessing and a curse. He said, **"These shall stand upon mount Gerizim to bless the people, when ye have passed over the Jordan: Simeon, and Levi, and Judah, and Issachar, and Joseph, and Benjamin. And these shall stand upon mount Ebal for the curse: Reuben, Gad, and Asher, and Zebulun, Dan, and Naphtali"** (Deuteronomy 27:12-13).

Those who were to bless the people were all sons of Leah and Rachel, Jacob's wives. Those who were to utter the curse were all sons of Zilpah and Bilhah, Jacob's concubines, except for Reuben who lost the right of the firstborn because he lay with Bilhah, and Zebulun the youngest son of Leah. All of that suggests uttering the blessing was given to the tribes with the higher ranks of genealogy.

There is no record of what they were to say for the blessing, but the following passage tells what they were to utter for the curse. Here is what Moses told the Levites to say, and what the people were to answer (Deuteronomy 27:15-26):

- **Cursed be the man who makes a graven or molten image, an abomination to Jehovah, the work of the hands of the craftsman, and sets it up in secret. And all the people shall answer and say, Truly.**
- **Cursed be he who dishonors his father or his mother. And all the people shall say, Truly.**
- **Cursed be he who removes his neighbor's landmark. And all the people shall say, Truly.**
- **Cursed be he who makes the blind to wander out of the way. And all the people shall say, Truly.**
- **Cursed be he who distorts the justice to the sojourner, fatherless, and widow. And all the people shall say, Truly.**
- **Cursed be he who lies with his father's wife, because he has uncovered his father's skirt. And all the people shall say, Truly.**
- **Cursed be he who lies with any manner of beast. And all the people shall say, Truly.**
- **Cursed be he who lies with his sister, the daughter of his father, or the daughter of his mother. And all the people shall say, Truly.**
- **Cursed be he who lies with his mother-in-law. And all the people shall say, Truly.**
- **Cursed be he who smites his neighbor in secret. And all the people shall say, Truly.**

- **Cursed be he who takes a bribe to kill an innocent man. And all the people shall say, Truly.**
- **Cursed is every man who does not continue in all the words of this law to do them. And all the people shall say, Truly.**

Those were the twelve curses to be uttered. The people were not the ones to utter all the curses. The Levites were given that task, and they were to utter them with a loud voice for the people to hear. The people were to answer each curse with "Truly," which indicated their affirmation and approval. Over a million people uttering that word altogether would have been such a mighty voice that it may have shaken the earth. There seems to be nothing significant in those particular curses. They were simply a sample of the things God had forbidden of them. Indeed, the last curse was worded to be inclusive, cursing **"every man who does not continue in all the words of this law."**

Blessings

After giving the command of the blessing and the curse to be spoken on the two mountains, Moses said to them, **"And it shall come to pass, if thou shall hearken diligently to the voice of Jehovah thy God, to observe to do all his commandments which I command thee this day ..."** (Deuteronomy 28:1).

Then he mentioned the many blessings they would receive, which I list below:

- God would set them on high above all the nations of the earth.
- They would be blessed in the city.
- They would be blessed in the field.
- The fruit of their body would be blessed.
- The fruit of their ground would be blessed.
- The fruit of their beasts would be blessed.
- The increase of their cattle would be blessed.
- The young of their flock would be blessed.
- Their basket and their kneading-trough would be blessed.
- They would be blessed when they came in and when they went out.
- Jehovah would cause their enemies that rose up against them to be smitten before them.
- Their enemies would come out against them one way, and would flee before them seven ways.
- Jehovah would command the blessing upon them in their barns, and in all that they put their hand to.
- And he would bless them in the land which Jehovah their God gave them.

However, all those blessings were contingent upon their obedience: **"… if thou shall hearken diligently to the voice of Jehovah thy God, to observe to do all his commandments which I command thee this day ..."** (Deuteronomy 28:1). He would bless their productivity; he would defeat their enemies; he would bless their land and all their activities.

Then he mentioned more blessings:

- Jehovah would establish them for a holy people to himself.
- All the peoples of the earth would see that they were called by the name of Jehovah, and they would be afraid of them.
- Jehovah would make them plenteous for good, in the fruit of their body, and in the fruit of their cattle, and in the fruit of their ground, in the land which Jehovah swore to their fathers to give them.
- Jehovah would open to them his good treasure the heavens, to give the rain of their land in its season, and to bless all the work of their hand.
- They would lend to many nations, and would not borrow.
- Jehovah would make them the head, and not the tail.
- They would only be above, and they would not be beneath.

Again, however, all those blessings were contingent upon their obedience. For he said they would be **"if thou shall hearken to the commandments of Jehovah thy God, which I command thee this day, to observe and to do, and shall not turn aside from any of the words which I command you this day, to the right hand, or to the left, to go after other gods to serve them**" (Deuteronomy 28:13-14). Continuing to receive God's blessings requires our continuing vigilance. For the enemies of God and his righteousness, Satan and his disciples, are continually striving to undermine and defeat our obedience to him.

Curses

As with his blessings his curses were contingent upon what they did, in this case their disobedience. Moses said all those curses would come upon them if they did not observe to do all his commandments and statutes. But what did he mean by all? Since he was not speaking to individuals but to the entire nation, perhaps he simply meant that if they disobeyed all of them they would be given all the curses. Hence, the price of total disobedience was being totally cursed. Never forget the proverb of Solomon, which says, **"Righteousness exalts a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people"** (Proverbs 14:34).

Nations can be righteous in some ways and sinful in others. Therefore, they would be exalted by their righteousness, but reproached by their sinfulness. A modern example is my own country of America. There are many righteous things that are done here, but the growing sinfulness in it is adding to its reproach.

Here are curses the sons of Israel would suffer for disobedience:

- Cursed they would be in the city.
- Cursed they would be in the field.
- Cursed would be their basket and their kneading-trough.
- Cursed would be the fruit of their body, and the fruit of their ground, the increase of their cattle, and the young of their flock.
- Cursed they would be when they came in and when they went out.

- Jehovah would send upon them cursing, discomfiture, and rebuke, in all that they put their hand to do, until they were destroyed, and until they perish quickly.
- Jehovah would make the pestilence cling to them, until he had consumed them from off the land.
- Jehovah would smite them with consumption, and with fever, and with inflammation, and with fiery heat, and with the sword, and with blight, and with mildew.
- Those things would pursue them until they perished.
- The sky that was over their head would be brass, and the earth that was under them would be iron.
- Jehovah would make the rain of their land powder and dust. From the sky it would come down upon them, until they were destroyed.
- Jehovah would cause them to be smitten before their enemies.
- They would go out one way against them, and would flee seven ways before them.
- They would be tossed to and fro among all the kingdoms of the earth.
- Their dead bodies would be food to all birds of the sky, and to the beasts of the earth, and there would be none to frighten them away.
- Jehovah would smite them with the boil of Egypt, and with the emerods, and with the scurvy, and with the itch, of which they could not be healed.
- Jehovah would smite them with madness, and with blindness, and with confusion of mind.
- They would grope at noonday, as the blind man gropes in darkness.
- They would not prosper in their ways.
- They would only be oppressed and robbed always, and there would be none to save them.
- They would betroth a wife, and another man would lie with her.
- They would build a house, and they would not dwell in it.
- They would plant a vineyard, and would not use the fruit of it.
- Their ox would be slain before their eyes, and they would not eat of it.
- Their donkey would be violently taken away from before their face, and would not be restored to them.
- Their sheep would be given to their enemies, and they would have none to save them.
- Their sons and their daughters would be given to another people. And their eyes would look, and fail with longing for them all the day, and there would be nothing in the power of their hand.
- The fruit of their ground, and all their labors, would a nation eat up which they knew not.
- They would only be oppressed and crushed always.
- They would be mad because of the sight of their eyes which they would see.
- Jehovah would smite them in the knees, and in the legs, with a sore boil, of which they could not be healed, from the sole of their foot to the crown of their head.
- Jehovah would bring them, and their king whom they would set over them, to a nation that they had not known, they nor their fathers.
- There they would serve other gods, wood and stone.

- They would become an astonishment, a proverb, and a byword, among all the peoples where Jehovah would lead them away.
- They would carry much seed out into the field, and would gather little in, for the locust would consume it.
- They would plant vineyards and dress them, but they would neither drink of the wine, nor gather, for the worm would eat them.
- They would have olive trees throughout all their borders, but they would not anoint themselves with the oil, for their olives would drop off.
- They would beget sons and daughters, but they would not be theirs, for they would go into captivity.
- All their trees and the fruit of their ground would the locust possess.
- The sojourner who was in the midst of them would mount up above them higher and higher, and they would come down lower and lower.
- He would lend to them, and they would not lend to him.
- He would be the head, and they would be the tail.

Jehovah said, **"... all these curses shall come upon thee, and shall pursue thee, and overtake thee, till thou be destroyed, because thou hearkened not to the voice of Jehovah thy God, to keep his commandments and his statutes which he commanded thee, and they shall be upon thee for a sign and for a wonder, and upon thy seed forever. Because thou served not Jehovah thy God with joyfulness, and with gladness of heart, by reason of the abundance of all things ..."** (Deuteronomy 28:45-47). Then he told of even more curses:

- They would serve their enemies that Jehovah would send against them, in hunger, and in thirst, and in nakedness, and in want of all things.
- He would put a yoke of iron upon their neck, until he had destroyed them.
- Jehovah would bring a nation against them from far, from the end of the earth, as the eagle flies, a nation whose tongue they would not understand, a nation of fierce countenance, that would not regard the person of the old, nor show favor to the young, and would eat the fruit of their cattle, and the fruit of their ground, until they be destroyed, that also would not leave them grain, new wine, or oil, the increase of their cattle, or the young of their flock, until they had caused them to perish.
- That nation would besiege them in all their gates, until their high and fortified walls came down, in which they trusted, throughout all their land. And they would besiege them in all their gates throughout all their land, which Jehovah their God had given them.
- And they would eat the fruit of their own body, the flesh of their sons and of their daughters, whom Jehovah their God had given them, in the siege and in the distress with which their enemies would distress them.
- The man who was tender among them, and very delicate, his eye would be evil toward his brother, and toward the wife of his bosom, and toward the remnant of his sons whom he had remaining, so that he would not give to any of them of the flesh of his

sons whom he would eat, because he had nothing left to him, in the siege and in the distress with which their enemy would distress them in all their gates.

- The tender and delicate woman among them, who would not adventure to set the sole of her foot upon the ground for delicateness and tenderness, her eye would be evil toward the husband of her bosom, and toward her son, and toward her daughter, and toward her young one who comes out from between her feet, and toward her sons whom she would bear, for she would eat them secretly for want of all things, in the siege and in the distress with which their enemy would distress them in their gates.

Moses said if they did not observe to do all the words of the law, that they may fear his glorious and fearful name **"**JEHOVAH THY GOD**"** then these things would also happen:

- Jehovah would make their calamities extraordinary, and the calamities of their seed, even great calamities and of long continuance, and severe sicknesses and of long continuance.
- And he would bring upon them again all the diseases of Egypt, which they were afraid of, and they would cling to them.
- Every sickness, and every calamity, which was not written in the book of the law, them Jehovah would bring upon them, until they be destroyed.
- And they would be left few in number, whereas they were as the stars of heaven for multitude, because they did not hearken to the voice of Jehovah their God.
- It would come to pass, that, as Jehovah rejoiced over them to do them good, and to multiply them, so Jehovah would rejoice over them to cause them to perish, and to destroy them.
- And they would be plucked from off the land where they went in to possess it.
- And Jehovah would scatter them among all peoples, from the one end of the earth even to the other end of the earth.
- And there they would serve other gods, which they had not known, them nor their fathers, even wood and stone.
- And among those nations they would find no ease, and there would be no rest for the sole of their foot.
- There Jehovah would give them a trembling heart, and failing of eyes, and pining of soul.
- And their life would hang in doubt before them, and they would fear night and day, and would have no assurance of their life.
- In the morning they would say, Would it were evening! and at evening they would say, Would it were morning! for the fear of their heart which they would fear, and for the sight of their eyes which they would see.
- And Jehovah would bring them into Egypt again with ships, by the way of which he said to them, Thou shall see it no more again. And there they would sell themselves to their enemies for bondmen and for bondwomen, and no man would buy them.

SOME HISTORY

Both the blessings and the curses came to pass in the history of ancient Israel. Their most prosperous time was during the reigns of king David and king Solomon. The Bible says that king Solomon **"ruled over all the kings from the River** [Euphrates] **even to the land of the Philistines, and to the border of Egypt"** (Second Chronicles 9:26). And that was achieved during the time of David. The Bible also says of Solomon, **"And the king made silver and gold to be in Jerusalem as stones, and cedars he made to be as the sycamore trees that are in the lowland, for abundance"** (Second Chronicles 1:15).

Yet as is true of mankind everywhere they became progressively more corrupt and decadent in spirit. And that is what brought upon the curses as Jehovah had warned them. Here is a description of what they had become like from the prophet Micah: **"The devout man has perished out of the earth, and there is none upright among men. They all lie in wait for blood. They hunt every man his brother with a net. Their hands are upon that which is evil to do it diligently. The ruler asks, and the judge *asks* for a bribe. And the great man, he utters the evil desire of his soul. Thus they weave it together. The best of them is as a brier. The most upright is *worse* than a thorn hedge. The day of thy watchmen, even thy visitation, has come. Now shall be their perplexity. Trust ye not in a neighbor. Put ye not confidence in a friend. Keep the doors of thy mouth from her who lies in thy bosom. For the son dishonors the father. The daughter rises up against her mother, the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law. A man's enemies are the men of his own house"** (Micah 7:2-6).

God sent many prophets to warn the people of his wrath to come because of their wickedness. Here is what the author of Second Chronicles said about them before their final destruction: **"... all the chiefs of the priests, and the people, trespassed very greatly after all the abominations of the nations. And they polluted the house of Jehovah which he had hallowed in Jerusalem. And Jehovah, the God of their fathers, sent to them by his messengers, rising up early and sending, because he had compassion on his people, and on his dwelling-place. But they mocked the messengers of God, and despised his words, and scoffed at his prophets, until the wrath of Jehovah arose against his people, till there was no remedy"** (Second Chronicles 36:14-16).

God wanted to spare them destruction, but **"there was no remedy."** He tried everything he could to persuade them to repent, because he had compassion on his people. But they were stubborn and refused, and they even persecuted his messengers. Who can accuse God of being unjust for destroying them? They had been warned many times, even from the beginning of their nation.

PART THREE:
LAW IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

Part 3:1

LAW IN MATTHEW

Jesus was born in the land of Israel about fifteen hundred years after Moses, and he lived during a time when the Jews were ruled by the Romans. The Jews were humiliated by the Roman occupation, and they began to look for the promised Messiah to save them. However, they were looking for a worldly leader who would restore their national independence and build a mighty nation for them.

When Jesus came there were two dominant sects of the Jews: the Sadducees and the Pharisees. The New Testament does not give much detail about their differences. One main difference was about belief in the afterlife and the spirit world. The Bible says, **"Sadducees say to be no resurrection nor agent nor spirit, but Pharisees acknowledge them all"** (Acts 23:8). The Pharisees were also described as more strict about obeying the laws of Moses. However, they were also hypocrites who applied some to excess while neglecting others. And they added many of their traditions to them. The Pharisees were those who most often accused Jesus and his disciples of violating some law or tradition.

The New Testament begins with the book of Matthew. It first gives a genealogy of Jesus, beginning with Abraham. Then it tells of his birth and where his parents raised him. After that it tells about the preaching of John the immerser whose role was primarily to prepare the people for the Christ. Jesus lived a quiet life as a carpenter in the province of Galilee until he was thirty years old. Then when he began his ministry he came to John to be immersed. After which he fasted forty days and forty nights in the wilderness where he was tempted by the devil. After that he went back to Galilee, preached repentance, and began to call his apostles. He also began to perform miracles of healing as proof of his authenticity. Then Matthew records what is called Jesus' sermon on the mount.

LAW AND THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT

Jesus and the law of Moses

In his sermon Jesus contrasted his teaching with what they had been taught from the law and their traditions. He began by describing who were blessed by God and how they should display their lives. Then he spoke about the law of Moses. He said to his disciples, **"Think not that I came to abolish the law or the prophets. I came not to abolish, but to fulfill. For truly I say to you, until the heaven and the earth pass away, one iota or one tittle will, no, not pass away from the law, until all things come to pass. Whoever therefore may relax one of these least commandments, and may teach men so, he will be called least in the kingdom of the heavens. But whoever may do and may teach them, this man will be called great in the kingdom of the heavens"** (5:17-19).

While he was on the earth Jesus was careful to obey all the laws of Moses, and he commanded other Jews to obey them. His Jewish disciples even continued to obey the laws of Moses after his church was established. In contrast, when Gentiles were later converted

they were commanded not to obey that law. The transition by those first Jewish Christians away from the law of Moses is explained in Part 4:6.

Conflict

In his sermon Jesus gave some lessons from the ten commandments, as well as other parts of the law. One of those commandments is about murder, and Jesus said, **"Ye have heard that it was said to them in old times, Thou shall not murder, and whoever murders will be liable to the judgment. But I say to you, that every man who is angry at his brother without cause will be liable to the judgment, and whoever speaks an insult to his brother will be liable to the council, and whoever says, Foolish man, will be liable to the hell of fire"** (5:21-22)**.** Jesus did not teach against punishment for murder. Nor did he restrict the law about murder. He extended it to include punishment for hostile feelings and words against a brother, not just hostile behavior. Remember, the use of the word brother in the Bible most often refers to associates beyond blood relatives, such as fellow Israelites and fellow Christians.

Jesus also said, **"If therefore thou should bring thy gift to the altar, and remember there that thy brother has anything against thee, leave there thy gift before the altar, and go. First be reconciled to thy brother, and then, after coming, bring thy gift. Be agreeing with thine opponent quickly, while thou are with him on the way, lest the opponent deliver thee to the judge, and the judge deliver thee to the subordinate, and thou will be cast into prison. Truly I say to thee, thou will, no, not come out from there, until thou have paid the last quadran"** (5:23-26). That teaching emphasizes reconciliation among brothers. In the sight of God reconciliation among brothers is even more important than bringing gifts to the altar. And making reconciliation in legal disputes is much better than taking them to court. Not only is it more practical and efficient, but it prevents or reduces the bitter aftereffects of lawsuits.

Adultery

Jesus spoke of another of the ten commandments, when he said, **"Ye have heard that it was said, Thou shall not commit adultery. But I say to you, that every man who looks on a woman to crave her has already committed adultery with her in his heart"** (5:27-28). Notice Jesus did not abolish the law against adultery. Instead, he extended it to include thoughts as well as behavior.

After warning against anything that would cause them to sin he spoke of divorce. He told them, **"And it was said, Whoever may divorce his wife, let him give her a divorce certificate. But I say to you, that whoever may divorce his wife apart from a matter of fornication, disposes her to commit adultery, and whoever may marry her who has been divorced commits adultery"** (5:31-32). The law of Moses allowed men to divorce their wives, but Jesus condemned it except for one cause. Jesus later said the reason the law allowed divorce was because of the hardness of their hearts. Jesus was teaching a higher level of morality, which included restricting divorce to one cause only, namely fornication. Jesus said whoever divorced his wife apart from fornication disposed her to

commit adultery. That was because if she remarried it would be adultery in the sight of God. If that command of Jesus was obeyed among his disciples, then only guilty women would be divorced. And any Christian man who married such a woman would also become guilty (Christians were commanded not to marry unbelievers). Of course, a Christian man was not obligated to divorce his guilty wife. He simply had that right.

Jesus did not apply that command to women, and he gave no reason why. For one thing, Jewish women were not allowed to divorce their husbands. God has never given equal rights to women, except for the opportunity of salvation. Although adultery was a capital offense in the law of Moses for both men and women, adultery by a woman was considered the greater sin. For one thing, it often produced a bastard which her husband would then need to raise if he kept her.

Swearing

After that Jesus spoke about swearing, which was also dealt with in the law of Moses. He said, **"Again, ye have heard that it was said to them in old times, Thou shall not swear falsely, but shall render to the Lord thine oaths. But I say to you, not to swear at all, neither by heaven, because it is the throne of God, nor by the earth, because it is the footstool of his feet, nor by Jerusalem, because it is the city of the great King. Neither shall thou swear by thy head, because thou cannot make one hair white or black. But let your word be, Yes, yes, No, no. And anything beyond these is from evil"** (5:33-37). That command was also for a higher level of morality. Giving an oath for something implies a man's word was not always trustworthy.

There was a time when faith in Christ was strong in the Western world, so that a man's word was his bond. Swearing to something was not necessary. That is what Jesus wants among his disciples; our word should always be trustworthy. Therefore, oaths should not be needed. However, not everybody is a Christian. Therefore, swearing to something in worldly affairs is needed. And what Jesus taught was never intended to be for every affair. It was to be the higher standard for his disciples. The fact is, signing a contract is no different from swearing to the agreement. It goes beyond a man's word, and those things are necessary for transactions in the world with unbelievers.

Those who interpret Jesus' words literally against swearing in every circumstance are well meaning but misled. Jesus was setting a higher standard for interactions among his disciples, but we all must live among unbelievers as well. Therefore, we must sometimes do things such as being involved with lawsuits and swearing to what we say.

Justice

Next Jesus quoted another law of Moses. He said, **"Ye have heard that it was said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth. But I say to you, not to resist what is troublesome, but whoever will strike thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also. And to the man who wants to sue thee, and take away thy coat, thou shall leave him thy cloak also. And whoever will draft thee for one mile, go thou with him two"** (5:38-41). That has been one of the most mistranslated and misinterpreted passages in the

New Testament. And the consequences have led to untold sorrow and harm to Christians. The law of an eye for an eye is a law for justice. It is just for a man to lose his eye or tooth if he willfully destroys the eye or tooth of another man. If that kind of justice were applied swiftly and reliably the number of assaults would greatly diminish. Many souls would be spared harm with such preventive measures. But alas the world does not want justice, and they have convinced Christians that Jesus did not want it either. Therefore, the law of an eye for an eye has become demonized and hated. And anybody who suggests applying it is condemned by virtually everybody else.

What Jesus actually taught was just like his contrasts with murder and adultery. He did not teach against punishment for those sins, he condemned even wanting to murder or commit adultery. He *extended* the prohibition against murder and adultery. And that is what he taught regarding the law of an eye for an eye; he extended it. The law of an eye for an eye says there should be exact retribution for harm done. What Jesus said was to go beyond exact retribution, and add even more compensation. He did not teach that a man should offer to have his left eye destroyed if someone destroyed his right one. He taught that if you deserve a slap on the face, then offer to take another slap. Take more than justice requires. If you lose a lawsuit about your coat, surrender your cloak as well; give more than is required. And the same was for going a mile. Apparently Roman law allowed their officials to draft any man to go up to a mile for some service when he was needed. Jesus taught his disciples to offer to go two miles. Doing more than justice requires ensures that justice will be fully satisfied. It also greatly helps prevent disputes and promotes good will among men. Think of what kind of reputation Christians would have if they were known to use that "second-mile" spirit in their interactions with others.

Nevertheless, beware of misinterpretation. Jesus did not mean we should reward injustice. There should be no turning the other cheek or giving up the cloak if nothing was deserved to begin with. Jesus never taught pacifism and surrendering to evil. The only time he surrendered to evil was when he was arrested and crucified. And that was for a special purpose commanded him by God. Other translators claim the words say that we should not resist evil or an evil person. I have no doubt that is a mistranslation, for that idea only pleases evil men and not God. What Jesus said was that we should not resist things that are troublesome. Deserving a slap, losing a lawsuit about our coat, or having to go a mile for somebody else are unpleasant things. Jesus told his disciples not to resist such things, but to endure them when required and do even more.

His apostle Paul said, **"Be thou not overcome by evil, but overcome evil by good"** (Romans 12:21). That is the kind of thing Jesus was teaching. Use every opportunity to overcome evil by doing good. And going beyond exact recompense when we commit an offense is part of that. Appeasement toward evil and evil men is the exact opposite. It strengthens and encourages evil; it does not overcome it. Part of overcoming evil with good is combating evil, not surrendering to it. Jesus used physical force to drive out the moneychangers from the temple because they were evil men (see John 2:15). That was certainly resisting evil, something the false teachers claim he taught against. He also se-

verely rebuked the scholars and Pharisees in public, uttering curses (woes) against them (see Matthew 23). That was resisting evil men. Moreover, there were many times when Jesus combated demons. Those were mysterious evil spirits that would sometimes possess persons and afflict them. They were invisible but were living things with enough intelligence to be able to converse with Jesus. He always rebuked and opposed them. That is how we should always respond to evil men: rebuke and oppose them.

Charity

The law of Moses commanded the sons of Israel to lend to poor men sufficient for their needs. But Jesus went beyond that when he said, **"Give to him who asks thee, and turn thou not away from him who wants to borrow from thee"** (5:42). Like his other general commands, that should not be taken literally in an absolute sense. For there were many times when Jesus refused to give to somebody who asked him. Consider this passage: **"And another of his disciples said to him, Lord, allow me first to go and bury my father. But Jesus said to him, Follow me, and leave the dead to bury their own dead"** (8:21-22). Jesus refused the man's request. And there are other examples of his refusal to always "give to him who asks."

What Jesus taught when he said we should give to him who asks was simply that his disciples should be generous to those in need. Christians should be a charitable people. However, we should also be wise and discriminating in all things, including our giving. Jesus never taught indiscriminate giving. We always need to use good judgment about who we give to, as well as what and how much to give. That is shown by the examples of Jesus himself. When in doubt about any of his commands, read about what Jesus himself did.

Love for others

There is a passage in the law of Moses that commanded the sons of Israel to do good to their enemies. It says, **"If thou meet thine enemy's ox or his donkey going astray, thou shall surely bring it back to him again. If thou see the donkey of him who hates thee lying under his burden, thou shall refrain leaving him. Thou shall surely release *it* with him"** (Exodus 23:4-5). Jesus also taught his disciples to love their enemies. He said to them, **"Ye have heard that it was said, Thou shall love thy neighbor, and hate thine enemy. But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who mistreat you and persecute you, so that ye may become sons of your Father in the heavens, because he makes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and makes rain on the righteous and the unrighteous. For if ye love those who love you, what reward have ye? Do not even the tax collectors the same? And if ye only greet your friends, what do ye extra? Do not even the tax collectors this way? Ye therefore shall be perfect, even as your Father in the heavens is perfect"** (5:43-48).

Jesus told them they had heard it was said, **"Thou shall love thy neighbor, and hate thine enemy."** The part about loving their neighbor is found in the law of Moses, but the part about hating their enemy is not. Of course, Jesus did not say any of the things he

spoke about in his sermon on the mount were in the law of Moses, although some certainly were. The part about murder and adultery are both in the ten commandments. However, the Jews have added many things to their laws, and the part about hating their enemy was probably one of them. In fact Peter told a Gentile, **"Ye understand how it is unlawful for a Jewish man to fraternize or to visit with a foreign man"** (Acts 10:28), but that law is not a part of the laws of Moses. On the contrary, the law of Moses commanded them to love strangers.

The laws of Moses contain many commands to treat foreigners with kindness and consideration. One of them says, **"And if a stranger sojourns with thee in your land, ye shall not do him wrong. The stranger that sojourns with you shall be to you as the home-born among you, and thou shall love him as thyself, for ye were sojourners in the land of Egypt. I am Jehovah your God"** (Leviticus 19:33-34). They were to love him as they loved themselves. The sojourners in that passage obviously refer to Gentiles, for the Israelites were sojourners in Egypt, but they were certainly not Egyptians. According to the law of Moses Gentiles were even allowed to bring animals to the altar for burnt offerings (see Numbers 15:14). However, during Jesus' time Jewish hatred for Gentiles was so intense that they were not even allowed in the temple area. And they created laws such as the one Peter mentioned forbidding Jews to fraternize or visit with Gentiles. Even modern Jews retain the idea that the laws of Moses about accommodating strangers only apply to proselytes. They conveniently forget that the sons of Israel were not proselytes in Egypt, which shows how their interpretation of that command is false.

Regarding the command to love their enemies, as with all the others it must be interpreted and applied properly. First, it is important to understand what Jesus and the law meant by an enemy in those commands. It is foolish and naïve to think those commands were to be applied to every kind of enemy we might have. The world contains many wicked and evil men who are enemies of the righteous. And we should by no means love and support those kinds of evil men. On the other hand, virtually every man has enemies who are not evil and wicked. They include rivals and competitors as well as men who simply hate us for some reason or another. Even normally righteous men can harbor ill will toward, or be in opposition to other righteous men, which makes them enemies. Jesus commanded his disciples to be kind and loving in such situations. Jesus always wanted righteous men to be reconciled, and being kind and loving encourages reconciliation.

Jesus told how God blesses his enemies. Whenever we sin we become an enemy of God, and those who live in sin are habitual enemies. Yet God seeks reconciliation. That is why he continues to bless us even when we are his enemies. Paul spoke of that when he said, **"For if, while being enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of his Son, much more having been reconciled we will be saved by his life"** (Romans 5:11). He also said, **"So then if any man is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old things have passed away, behold, all things have become new. And all things are from God who reconciled us to himself through Jesus Christ, and who gave to us the ministry of reconciliation. How that God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself, not imput-**

ing to them their trespasses, and having committed to us the word of reconciliation. We are therefore, ambassadors on behalf of Christ, as though God were calling through us. We plead on behalf of Christ, be ye reconciled to God" (Second Corinthians 5:17-20).

Nevertheless, there is a limit to God's patience toward his enemies. For Paul uttered this warning: **"Or do thou despise the wealth of his goodness and forbearance and long-suffering, not knowing that the goodness of God guides thee to repentance? But according to thy hardness, and thy impenitent heart, thou store up wrath to thyself in the day of wrath, and revelation, and righteous judgment of God, who will render to each man according to his works"** (Romans 2:4-6). God's offer of reconciliation for us is limited to this life. For there will be no opportunity to escape his wrath if we remain his enemy before the great day of judgment.

Regarding wicked men, they are not to be loved and supported, but rather to be opposed and punished. That is the responsibility of authorities. Speaking about an authority, Paul said, **"For he is a helper of God to thee for what is good. But if thou do what is evil, be afraid, for he does not bear the sword in vain. For he is a helper of God, vengeful for wrath to the man who commits evil"** (Romans 13:4). Notice Paul said authorities do not bear the sword in vain, and they are helpers of God vengeful for wrath. In other words, they have the power and the responsibility to apply severe punishment for God's vengeance against wicked men. And only corrupt authorities bless wicked men instead of punishing them. I groan when I see so much of that in modern America. Vicious criminals are often excused or given expensive "treatment" instead of the punishment they deserve. But they will not escape justice on God's great day of judgment.

I will mention one other example of blessing our enemies as Jesus would have us do. I watched a television documentary about the American conquest of Iwo Jima in the second world war. In that documentary they interviewed a Japanese doctor who surrendered near the end of that terrible battle. Here is what he said (the wording may not be exact): "The two things I remember most after we came out of the cave to surrender was how different the island looked, and the kindness of the Americans." We were a nation of Christians then, and unlike the brutal Japanese we treated our defeated enemies with compassion. We fought them vigorously while they were at war with us, but after the fighting we blessed them. We even helped them rebuild their nation instead of plundering and enslaving them. That was a result of our national Christian heritage.

The "golden rule"

Jesus then commanded against being public with our charity, our praying, and our fasting in order to be praised by men. He said we should do those things in secret so we could be rewarded by God. He also gave what we call the Lord's prayer as an example for them. Among other things that Jesus said, he encouraged them not to be anxious about their needs, and he told them not to be critical.

His last comment (in the sermon on the mount) about what is found in the law of Moses was the famous summary we call the golden rule: **"All things therefore, as many as ye may want that men should do to you, so also do ye to them, for this is the law and the prophets"** (7:12). God wants us to treat other men as we want to be treated. However, what did Jesus mean when he said that was the law and the prophets? For the law contained many commands about things unrelated to our treatment of others. He meant that was the fundamental and enduring principle of righteousness contained in the teachings of the Old Testament.

Jesus taught a few other things in his sermon on the mount after giving the golden rule. For example, he said the way of righteousness is narrow and restricted, and he warned about false prophets. He also said that many men would claim they served him, but he would reject them because of how they had lived. Finally, he gave a parable about building a good foundation for our lives. When he finished his sermon the people were astonished, because he taught as having authority and not as their scholars.

Healing a Leper

The book next says a leper asked him to be healed. After healing him, Jesus said, **"See thou speak to no man, but go, show thyself to the priest, and bring the gift that Moses commanded for a testimony to them"** (8:4). That offering was a requirement of the law of Moses. The text continues to describe how Jesus traveled around teaching and healing.

The Sabbath Day

Then it tells of a time his disciples were criticized by the Pharisees for violating the sabbath. The passage says, **"At that time Jesus went through the grain fields on the sabbath, and his disciples were hungry and began to pluck ears, and to eat. But the Pharisees, when they saw it, said to him, Behold, thy disciples do what is not permitted to do upon the sabbath. But he said to them, Have ye not read what David did when he was hungry, he and those with him, how he entered into the house of God, and ate the loaves of the presentation, which was not permitted for him to eat, nor for those with him, except only for the priests? Or have ye not read in the law, that on the sabbath the priests in the temple profane the sabbath, and are guiltless? But I say to you, that a greater than the temple is here. But if ye had known what this means, I desire mercy, and not sacrifice, ye would not have condemned the innocent. For the Son of man is Lord of the sabbath"** (12:1-8).

In that passage Jesus gave two examples from the Old Testament to show that the laws of Moses were not to be applied too rigidly. He told how the high priest had given David and his companions the sacred bread, which was to be for the priests only. And nowhere in the Bible was David condemned for taking that bread. Also the priests performed their duties during the sabbath and nowhere was that called a violation. Regarding the matter of eating the grain, the law allowed travelers to eat from another man's grain field, but they could not harvest anything. I will also mention that the law did not forbid travel during the sabbath,

but the Jews established a tradition that set a limit to how far a man could travel on that day. That distance was called a sabbath day's journey in the New Testament.

After that the text tells how he was again criticized for violating the sabbath. It says, **"And having departed from there, he went into their synagogue. And behold, there was a man having a withered hand. And they interrogated him, asking if it is permitted to heal on the sabbath, so that they might accuse him. And he said to them, What man of you will there be, who will have one sheep, and if this falls into a pit on the sabbath, will he not grasp it, and lift it out? How much therefore a man is superior to a sheep. So then it is permitted to do good on the sabbath. Then he says to the man, Stretch forth thy hand. And he stretched it forth, and it was restored whole, as the other. But when they went out, the Pharisees held a consultation against him, how they might destroy him"** (12:9-14). They could not counter his argument, but they condemned him anyway. That is a good illustration showing how laws alone can never make men righteous.

The Pharisees also found a way to condemn Jesus when he performed miracles of healing. They said, **"This man does not cast out demons, except by Beelzebub the ruler of the demons"** (12:24). But Jesus showed how illogical that argument was, and he severely rebuked them, calling them offspring of vipers. They also wanted him to show them a sign, apparently meaning some kind of spectacular show. However, Jesus refused. They would not accept all the signs of healing he performed, and he was not going to put on a show for them. Besides, I am confident no sign would have convinced them. Satan was actually allowed to be in the presence of God and speak with him. Yet the devil remained his adversary. Jesus called those Jews an evil and adulterous generation, and he told how former generations would arise in the judgment and condemn them.

After that he told many parables about what the kingdom of the heavens was like. Then the book tells how he was not accepted where he grew up. It tells how Herod had John the immerser killed. And it tells how Jesus fed five thousand men with only five loaves and two fishes. It also tells how he walked on the water to go to a boat that was carrying his disciples.

Traditions of Men

After that the scholars and Pharisees criticized him again. They said, **"Why do thy disciples transgress the tradition of the elders? For they do not wash their hands when they eat bread."** Jesus answered them, **"Why do ye also transgress the commandment of God, because of your tradition? For God commanded, saying, Honor thy father and thy mother, and, He who speaks evil of father or mother, let him perish in death. But ye say, Whoever may say to the father or the mother, Whatever thou might have benefited from me is an offering. And he will, no, not honor his father or mother. And ye have annulled the command of God because of your tradition. Ye hypocrites, well did Isaiah prophesy about you, saying, This people comes near me with their mouth, and honors me with their lips, but their heart is far distant from me. And in vain they worship me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men"** (15:2-9). Jews even today

transgress the commandments of God because of their traditions, of which there are many. Jesus called his critics blind leaders of blind men. Then he explained what really defiles a man.

After healing more afflicted souls he fed another great multitude with only seven loaves and a few small fishes. Then Pharisees came with Sadducees, and they again demanded a sign from the sky, which he again refused. And he warned his disciples of their hypocrisy. He also told them how he was going to be killed at Jerusalem, but would be raised up the third day. When Peter tried to dissuade him Jesus rebuked Peter, and he told how all who follow him must deny themselves. Six days later he took three of his apostles upon a mountain where he was transfigured before them, and he spoke with Moses and Elijah. When he came down he cast out a demon from a boy. Among other things, he told them they must be humble as a child, and he warned them against anything that would cause a child, or anybody who believes in him, to stumble.

Witnesses

He then told how they should try to be reconciled with their brothers. He said, **"But if thy brother should sin against thee, go and reprove him between thee and him alone. If he should hear thee, thou have gained thy brother. But if he should not hear, take with thee one or two besides, so that at the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. And if he is heedless of them, speak to the church. But if he is also heedless of the church, let him be to thee as the heathen and the tax collector"** (18:15-17). I quote that because the law of Moses also required testimony to be verified by two or three witnesses. That requirement was retained for Christians, because Paul told his brothers at Corinth, **"This third time I am coming to you. In the mouth of two witnesses or three every saying will be confirmed"** (Second Corinthians 13:1).

Divorce

After giving a parable about forgiveness, Pharisees came and asked him if it were permitted for a man to divorce his wife for every cause. The text says, **"And having answered, he said to them, Have ye not read that he who made them from the beginning made them male and female, and said, For this reason a man will leave his father and mother behind, and will be bonded with his wife, and the two will be in one flesh? So that they are no longer two, but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, no man shall separate. They say to him, Why then did Moses command to give a writing of divorcement, and to divorce her? He says to them, For your hard heart Moses allowed you to divorce your wives, but from the beginning it did not happen this way. And I say to you, that whoever may divorce his wife, not for fornication, and will marry another, commits adultery. And he who married her who has been divorced commits adultery"** (19:4-9).

After hearing that response even his disciples said that meant it was not advantageous for a man to marry. Jesus then told them about men who were able to forsake marriage because of the kingdom of the heavens. He added that not all men were able (to forsake marriage).

However, I want to point out, Jesus often warned that being his disciple meant forsaking your life. Hence, whether marriage is advantageous to a man or not is irrelevant to being a Christian.

The Ten Commandments

After telling how Jesus laid his hands on some children, the book says, **"And behold one man having come to him, said, Good teacher, what good thing should I do so that I may have eternal life? And he said to him, Why do thou call me good? There is none good except one, God. But if thou want to enter into life, keep the commandments. He says to him, Which? And Jesus said, Thou shall not murder. Thou shall not commit adultery. Thou shall not steal. Thou shall not testify falsely. Honor the father and mother, and, Thou shall love thy neighbor as thyself. The young man says to him, All these things I have kept from my youthfulness. What do I lack yet? Jesus said to him, If thou want to be perfect, go, sell the things being possessed by thee, and give to the poor, and thou will have treasure in heaven. And come, follow me. But when the young man heard the saying, he went away sorrowing, for he was having many possessions. And Jesus said to his disciples, Truly I say to you, that a rich man will enter into the kingdom of the heavens difficultly"** (19:16-23).

As with many other things that Jesus said, we should not interpret his words too literally. When the man asked what he should do to have eternal life, Jesus told him to keep the commandments. When asked which, Jesus quoted some of the ten commandments, and the command to love our neighbor as ourself. It would be foolish to interpret that literally, meaning only those things were necessary. Jesus simply gave them as examples of the most important things in the law of Moses. Those are the kinds of things God has always wanted.

When the man asked what he should do to have eternal life, Jesus told him if he wanted to enter into life he must keep the commandments. Then he told him if he wanted to be perfect he had to sell all his possessions, give to the poor, and follow him. Why Jesus answered that way is not clear. He sometimes spoke in riddles to encourage us to think. Yes, if a man kept all the commandments without fail he could save his life for eternity. However, no man except Jesus has that ability. Therefore, our only way to be perfect before God is to enter the kingdom of the heavens. And that can only be done by self-denial, as Jesus often taught. The young man would not forsake his riches to follow Jesus, and so he could not enter into the kingdom. Of course, that does not mean every man must forsake his riches. What Jesus taught is that a man must forsake himself (in the sense of no longer living a self-centered life) in order to enter the kingdom, and that can include forsaking such things as popularity, power, and pleasure, as well as riches.

When Jesus told how hard it would be for rich men to enter into the kingdom of God, that astonished his disciples, and they wondered who could be saved. Peter told how they had forsaken all, and Jesus told of their great reward. Then he told a parable about workmen in a vineyard. After which he again told his apostles he was going to be betrayed and killed in Jerusalem. Then the mother of James and John asked Jesus to set them above the others. He

told them it was not his right to give it them. And he said if they wanted to be great they had to become servants.

Later he healed two blind men, and then made a grand entrance into Jerusalem with a great multitude. He went into the temple, cast out the merchants, and departed. The next day he taught his disciples a lesson about asking in prayer. Then in the temple the rulers demanded to know who gave him authority to do what he did. He asked them a question in turn, which they refused to answer. So he would not answer them either. Then he told some parables. The Pharisees came, trying to trap him in his talk, but they failed. After them came Sadducees who also challenged him with what they thought was a hard question. But he answered it easily and exposed their ignorance.

The Great Commandment

Then the text says, **"But the Pharisees, having heard that he silenced the Sadducees, they came together in the same place. And one of them, a lawyer, questioned, trying him, and saying, Teacher, which is the great commandment in the law? And Jesus said to him, Thou shall love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart, and with thy whole soul, and with thy whole mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like it, Thou shall love thy neighbor as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets"** (22:34-40). Those two commandments summarize all the teachings of the Old Testament. They are the two great principles of true righteousness, and both command us to love.

Then Jesus asked the Pharisees a question they could not answer, and so nobody dared question him any more. After that Jesus severely rebuked the scholars and Pharisees for their hypocrisy. He uttered eight woes against them, and called them serpents and offspring of vipers. He also prophesied the destruction of Jerusalem. Later he told his disciples to expect future sorrows, and he warned them to always be prepared for the time of the end. And he gave several parables about that.

Passover and the New Covenant

Then the text says, **"Now on the first day of unleavened bread the disciples came to Jesus, saying, Where do thou want that we should prepare for thee to eat the Passover? And he said, Go into the city to a certain man, and say to him, The teacher says, My time is near. I keep the Passover with my disciples with thee. And the disciples did as Jesus arranged for them, and they prepared the Passover. Now having become evening, he was sitting with the twelve"** (26:17-20). Jesus was always careful to obey all the law of Moses, and the Passover was part of it.

The remainder of the book of Matthew is about Jesus' betrayal and crucifixion. And he used the time of that last supper to warn them of what was coming and to encourage them. During that time he instituted the memorial supper for him: **"And as they were eating, Jesus, having taken bread, having expressed thanks, broke in pieces, and he gave to the disciples, and said, Take, eat, this is my body. And having taken the cup, having ex-**

pressed thanks, he gave to them, saying, All ye drink of it, for this is my blood of the new covenant, which is shed on behalf of many for remission of sins" (26:26-28). The new covenant superseded the old covenant of the law of Moses. That new covenant began on the day of Pentecost after his ascension into heaven. There is no evidence of the existence of any church before that.

The only other reference in Matthew to anything in the law of Moses is about the sabbath: **"Now late on the sabbath day, being dawn toward the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary came to see the tomb"** (28:1). An agent from heaven told them Jesus was not there, for he had been raised from the dead. He told them to tell his disciples Jesus would meet them in Galilee. When the women departed Jesus himself greeted them.

The book ends with Jesus' last instructions to his disciples on a mountain in Galilee. He said to them, **"All authority in heaven and on earth was given to me. After going, make ye disciples of all the nations, immersing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things, as many as I commanded you. And lo, I am with you all the days, until the end of the age. Truly"** (28:18-20).

Part 3:2

LAW IN MARK

A CLEANSED LEPER

Many of the things in Matthew are also told in Mark. The book of Mark begins with John the immerser. Jesus was immersed by him, and then he spent forty days in the wilderness where he was tempted by the devil. Next the book says Jesus went to Galilee and began proclaiming the good news of God. He also began calling his apostles. After that it tells how he healed many afflicted souls, one of whom was a leper. Jesus commanded the healed man to show himself to the priest as required in the law. That is the first reference in Mark to anything in the law of Moses. After healing some others Jesus called Matthew, who was a tax collector to join him. Before Matthew went with him he gave a supper where Jesus ate with many tax collectors and sinners. The Pharisees criticized him for that, but he told them he came to call sinners for repentance.

THE SABBATH DAY

After that the Pharisees criticized him about the sabbath. The text says, **"And it came to pass, that he was passing through the grain fields on the sabbath day, and his disciples began to make a path while plucking the ears. And the Pharisees said to him, Look, why are they doing what is not permitted on the sabbath day? And he said to them, Did ye never read what David did when he had need, and was hungry, he and those with him? How he entered into the house of God under Abiathar the high priest, and ate the loaves of the presentation, which is not permitted to eat except for the priests. And he also gave to those who were with him? And he said to them, The sabbath came into being for sake of man, and not man for sake of the sabbath. So then the Son of man is lord even of the sabbath"** (2:23-28). That story is also told in the book of Matthew.

Next the book tells how he was criticized again about the sabbath. It says, **"And he entered again into the synagogue, and a man was there who had a withered hand. And they watched him whether he would heal him on the sabbath day, so that they might accuse him. And he says to the man who had a withered hand, Stand up in the midst. And he says to them, Is it permitted to do good on the sabbath day or to do harm, to save life or to kill? But they were silent. And having looked around on them with anger, being grieved at the callousness of their heart, he says to the man, Stretch forth thy hand. And he stretched it out, and his hand was restored as the other. And the Pharisees having gone out, they straightaway were making a plot with the Herodians against him, how they might destroy him"** (3:1-6). That story is also told in the book of Matthew.

After traveling about and healing many other souls Jesus chose his twelve apostles. He also taught the people with many parables. Later he sent out his apostles in pairs for a while to preach and to heal. Next the book tells how Herod killed John the immerser. Then Jesus fed

five thousand men with five loaves and two fishes. After that he walked on the water to go to his apostles who were in the boat. He continued to travel and to heal.

Commandments Versus Traditions

Then the text tells of another time Jesus was criticized. The book says, **"And the Pharisees, and some of the scholars, having come from Jerusalem, gathered in to him. And having seen some of his disciples eating their loaves with profane hands, that is, unwashed, they accused them. (For the Pharisees, and all the Jews, unless they wash their hands carefully, do not eat, holding the tradition of the elders. And coming from the marketplace, they do not eat unless they bathe. And there are many other things that they have taken in to retain: washings of cups, and pots, and brazen vessels, and beds.) Then the Pharisees and the scholars demand of him, Why do thy disciples not walk according to the tradition of the elders, but eat their bread with unwashed hands?**

"And having answered, he said to them, Well did Isaiah prophesy about you hypocrites, as it is written, This people honors me with their lips, but their heart is far distant from me. But in vain they worship me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men. For having set aside the commandment of God, ye hold the tradition of men: washings of pots and cups and many other such like things ye do. And he said to them, Well do ye reject the commandment of God, so that ye may keep your tradition. For Moses said, Honor thy father and thy mother, and, He who speaks evil of father or mother, let him perish in death. But ye say, If a man should say to his father or mother, Whatever ye might be benefited from me is Corban, that is, an offering, then ye no longer allow him to do anything for his father or his mother, annulling the word of God by your tradition that ye have delivered. And many such like things ye do" (7:1-13). That story is also told in Matthew.

Jesus then told them what goes out of a man defiles him, not what goes in him. Jesus was referring to a man's spirit, which is defiled by his behavior not by what he eats. After healing some other people he fed another large multitude with only seven loaves and a few small fishes. Then Pharisees came and disputed with him, wanting a sign from the sky. He refused and got in a boat for the other side. On the way he warned his apostles about the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy. After healing some other folks he told his disciples that whoever followed him must deny himself. Then he took three of them on a mountain and was transfigured before them. When they came down he healed a boy possessed by an unclean spirit. Later his disciples discussed among themselves who was greater. However, Jesus told them **"If any man wants to be first, he will be last of all, and helper of all"** (9:35). And he warned against causing a child who believed in him to stumble. He also told of the great danger of anything that would cause them to stumble.

Divorce

After that the text says, **"And the Pharisees having approached, they demanded of him if it is permitted for a man to divorce a wife, testing him. And having answered, he said**

to them, What did Moses command you? And they said, Moses permitted to write a document of divorce, and to divorce her. But having answered, Jesus said to them, For your hard heart he wrote for you this commandment. But from the beginning of creation God made them male and female. Because of this a man will leave his father and mother behind, and will be bonded with his wife, and the two will be in one flesh. So then they are no more two, but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, no man shall separate. And in the house the disciples questioned him again about the same thing. And he says to them, Whoever may divorce his wife, and will marry another, commits adultery against her. And if a woman should divorce her husband, and will be married to another, she commits adultery" (10:2-12). That story is also told in the book of Matthew.

The Ten Commandments

Next the book tells about the rich young ruler who wanted to know how to obtain eternal life. It says, **"And as he was going forth on the way, one man having ran to him, and having knelt to him, questioned him, Good teacher, what should I do that I may inherit eternal life? And Jesus said to him, Why do thou call me good? None is good except one, God. Thou know the commandments. Thou shall not commit adultery. Thou shall not murder. Thou shall not steal. Thou shall not testify falsely. Thou shall not defraud. Thou shall honor thy father and mother. And having answered, he said to him, Teacher, all these things I have observed from my youth. And having looked at him, Jesus loved him, and said to him, One thing thou lack. Go thou, sell as many things as thou have, and give to the poor, and thou will have treasure in heaven. And after taking up the cross, come, follow me. But having become somber at the saying, he went away sorrowing, for he was a man who has many possessions"** (10:17-22). That story is also told in the book of Matthew.

Later he warned his apostles how he would be betrayed and killed in Jerusalem. After that James and John asked if they could sit one at his left hand and one at his right hand in his glory. But he taught them that his disciples were to be humble servants, and should not seek to lord over others. On his way to Jerusalem he healed a blind man. He then made a grand entrance into the city with a large multitude praising him. After which he entered the temple, drove out the merchants, and departed. The next day he used a fig tree to teach his disciples about asking in prayer. When he went back in the temple the rulers demanded to know who gave him authority to do what he did. But when they would not answer his question he would not answer their's either. Then he told them a parable. Later the Pharisees sought to trap him with questions but failed. The Sadducees tried the same thing but also failed.

The Great Commandments

Next the book says, **"And one of the scholars having come, having heard them disputing, knowing that he had answered them well, he questioned him, Which is the first commandment of all? And Jesus answered him, The first of all the commandments is,**

Hear, thou Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord, and thou shall love the Lord thy God from thy whole heart, and from thy whole soul, and from thy whole mind, and from thy whole strength. This is the first commandment. And this second is similar, Thou shall love thy neighbor as thyself. There is no other commandment greater than these. And the scholar said to him, Well, teacher. Thou spoke in truth that he is one, and there is no other but he. And to love him from the whole heart, and from the whole understanding, and from the whole soul, and from the whole strength, and to love his neighbor as himself, is more than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices. And when Jesus saw him, that he answered wisely, he said to him, Thou are not far from the kingdom of God. And no man dared to question him any more" (12:28-34).

Jesus told his disciples about the hypocrisy of the scholars and warned about them. Then he told how a poor widow's small gift to the treasury was more than the large gifts of the rich. After that he prophesied about the destruction of Jerusalem and the end of the world. And he warned them to be prepared. Then the text tells how a woman who anointed him was rebuked by his disciples, but he defended and praised her.

Passover and the New Covenant

After that the book says, **"And his disciples went forth, and came into the city, and found just as he had said to them. And they prepared the Passover. And having become evening he comes with the twelve"** (14:16-17). The Passover feast was established just before their exodus from Egypt, and it was the first command of the law of Moses. Jews still observe it, but not in the way it was commanded. Jesus also instituted the memorial supper for him. Those things are also told in Matthew.

After his betrayal and crucifixion his body was placed in a cave. Some of his women disciples came to anoint his body as soon as they were able. The text says, **"And when the sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James, and Salome, bought spices, so that having come, they might anoint him. And very much early morning on the first day of the week, they come near to the sepulcher when the sun was risen"** (16:1-2). Even though they were very eager to anoint him earlier they had waited until the sabbath was over. That is the last reference to anything about the law of Moses in the book of Mark. The book ends with the story of his resurrection and his last instructions to the apostles before his ascension into heaven.

Part 3:3

LAW IN LUKE

PURIFICATION OF MARY AND JESUS

Many of the things in this book are also in the books of Matthew and Mark. The book begins with the story of the birth of John the immerser, followed by the story of the birth of Jesus. After which the book says, **"And when eight days were fulfilled to circumcise him, that his name was called JESUS, the one called by the agent before he was conceived in the belly. And when the days of their purification according to the law of Moses were fulfilled, they brought him up to Jerusalem, to present him to the Lord, (just as it is written in a law of the Lord that every male that opens a womb will be called holy to the Lord), and to offer a sacrifice according to that which is said in a law of the Lord, a pair of turtledoves, or two young pigeons"** (2:21-24). The law required a lamb, but it also said if her means were not sufficient she could offer the turtledoves or pigeons. That shows how financially poor the parents of Jesus were. While they were in the temple a man inspired by God, and a woman who was a prophetess, both acknowledged the baby Jesus to be the Christ.

THE PASSOVER

After that the book says, **"And his parents went to Jerusalem every year at the feast of the Passover"** (2:41). At one Passover, when Jesus was twelve years old, his parents lost him, and they did not find him until three days later. He was in the temple among the teachers, and he asked them why they did not know he would be there. The book says Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men. Next it tells about the preaching of John the immerser, and Jesus being immersed by him. Then it says Herod cast John in prison. Next the book gives a genealogy of Jesus, beginning with Joseph, the husband of his mother Mary, and going back to Adam. Then it tells how he fasted forty days in the wilderness and was tempted by the devil. After that he returned to Nazareth where he was raised, and he preached in their synagogue. However, when he mentioned two stories in the Old Testament about how God blessed a Gentile instead of an Israelite they became enraged and tried to kill him. Then he went to other cities in Galilee preaching and healing. He also began to call his apostles.

CLEANSED LEPERS

Next the book says, **"And it came to pass while he was in one of the cities, behold, a man full of leprosy. And having seen Jesus, having fallen on his face, he besought him, saying, Lord, if thou will, thou can make me clean. And having stretched forth his hand, he touched him, having said, I will, be thou clean. And straightaway the leprosy departed from him. And he commanded him to tell no man, but, After going, show thyself to the priest, and bring concerning thy cleansing, just as Moses commanded for a testimony to them"** (5:12-14). That story is also told in the book of Matthew.

After that he healed many of the afflicted in the sight of Pharisees and law teachers who had come from many parts of the land. When they brought him a paralyzed man Jesus forgave his sins. The scholars and Pharisees said he did not have that authority. However, Jesus showed how he had authority to forgive sins by healing the paralyzed man. Jesus called Levi (also called Matthew), a tax collector, to follow him, and Levi made a great feast for him. When the scholars and Pharisees saw him eating with tax collectors and sinners they criticized him. But he told them he came to call sinners to repentance, and he gave some parables to illustrate.

The Sabbath Day

Then the text tells how The Pharisees criticized him about the sabbath. Those things are also told in the book of Matthew. It first says, **"Now it came to pass for him to be going through the grain fields on a particular sabbath, and his disciples were plucking the ears and were eating, rubbing them in their hands. But some of the Pharisees said to them, Why do ye what is not permitted to do on the sabbath day? And having answered them, Jesus said, Have ye not read even this, what David did when he was hungry, and those who were with him, how he entered into the house of God, and took and ate the loaves of the presentation, and also gave to those who were with him, which is not permitted to eat, except the priests alone? And he said to them, The Son of man is lord also of the sabbath"** (6:1-5).

The Pharisees criticized him again about the sabbath, but this time about healing: **"And it also came to pass on another sabbath for him to enter into the synagogue and teach. And a man was there, and his right hand was withered. And the scholars and the Pharisees watched if he would heal on the sabbath, so that they might find an accusation against him. But he knew their thoughts, and he said to the man who had the withered hand, Rise up, and stand forth in the midst. And having risen, he stood up. Then Jesus said to them, I will question you. What? Is it permitted on the sabbath to do good, or to do harm, to save life, or to kill? And having looked around on them all, he said to him, Stretch forth thy hand. And he did, and his hand was restored whole as the other. But they were filled with fury, and deliberated with each other what they might do to Jesus"** (6:6-11).

After that he chose twelve men to be his apostles. Then he healed many afflicted souls who came to him. He also blessed the suffering and the afflicted, and he utter woes against those who are popular and at ease. He also taught many things that are recorded in the sermon on the mount in the book of Matthew. Then he healed the bondman of a centurion, and he raised from the dead a young man who was being carried in a coffin to his grave. The young man was the only son of a widow. Next John the immerser sent two of his disciples to Jesus to question him. After they departed Jesus spoke words of praise about John to the multitude.

Jesus continued to heal the afflicted as he traveled about. When a large multitude gathered around him he told them a parable. Among other things the book tells how he commanded

the stormy wind and the sea to be calm when they were in a boat. After they crossed the sea he healed a man who had been possessed by demons, but the people of that land asked him to depart. After returning in the boat, he healed a woman who had an issue of blood, and he restored a man's daughter who had died. After that he sent out the twelve to preach the kingdom of God, and he gave them power to heal. When they returned a great multitude of five thousand men plus women and children followed them, and he fed them all with five loaves and two fishes. Afterward he told his apostles he was going to be killed by rulers of the Jews, but he would rise the third day. Then he took three of them on a mountain, was transfigured before them, and he spoke with Moses and Elijah. When they came down he cast out a demon from a man's son. After teaching some other lessons he appointed seventy other men to go out in pairs to teach, and he also gave them power to heal.

The Chief Commandments

Next the book says, **"And behold, a certain lawyer stood up testing him, and saying, Teacher, having done what, would I inherit eternal life? And he said to him, What is written in the law? How read thou? And having answered, he said, Thou shall love the Lord thy God from thy whole heart, and from thy whole soul, and from thy whole strength, and from thy whole mind, and thy neighbor as thyself. And he said to him, Thou answered correctly. Do this and thou will live"** (10:25-28). Jesus said those were the two chief commandments of the law.

The book then says, **"But he, wanting to justify himself, said to Jesus, And who is my neighbor?** In response to that question, Jesus told him the parable about a man attacked by bandits. A priest, a Levite, and a Samaritan saw the injured man, but only the Samaritan helped him. After the parable Jesus asked the lawyer, **"Which therefore, of these three, appears to thee to have become neighbor to the man who fell among the bandits?"** (10:36). The man answered, **"He who did mercy with him."** Jesus then told him, **"Go, and do thou likewise"** (10:37).

After that the book tells about Mary and Martha, who were of his faithful disciples. Later he gave what we call the Lord's prayer when a man asked him to teach them to pray. And he taught them how to ask in prayer. Then the text tells how he was accused of casting out demons by Beelzebub, ruler of the demons. But Jesus showed how illogical that accusation was. Among other things he also told them how some souls from previous generations would rise in the judgment and condemn theirs.

Righteousness and Legalism

Next the book says, **"Now as he spoke a certain Pharisee asks him that he might dine with him. And having entered in, he sat down. And when the Pharisee saw, he marveled that he did not first wash before dinner. And the Lord said to him, Now ye Pharisees cleanse the outside of the cup and of the platter, but your interior is full of plundering and wickedness. Ye foolish men, did not he who made the outside also make the inside? But give compassion, things that are inside, and behold, all things are clean to you. But woe to you Pharisees! Because ye tithe mint and rue and every**

plant, and pass by justice and the love of God. It is necessary to do these things, and not to neglect those things" (11:37-42). Jesus then uttered two more woes against them.

After that the text says, **"And having answered, a certain man of the lawyers says to him, Teacher, in saying these things thou rebuke us also. And he said, Woe also to you lawyers! Because ye load men with burdens difficult to bear, and ye yourselves touch not the burdens with one of your fingers. … Woe to you lawyers! Because ye took away the key of knowledge. Ye did not enter in yourselves, and ye hindered those who were entering in"** (11:45-52). That passage is more evidence showing that knowledge of laws is no guarantee of righteousness. Otherwise lawyers would be the most righteous of men. The sad truth is, lawyers are often among the worst of men. And indeed Jesus rebuked the lawyers of that generation for being so oppressive.

Those words of rebuke aroused the scholars and Pharisees to harass and provoke Jesus so he would say something they could accuse. But he ignored them and warned his disciples about the hypocrisy of the Pharisees. He also encouraged his disciples by telling them there was nothing hid that would not be revealed, and nothing can happen without God allowing it. Therefore they should fear God only.

After Jesus taught them some other things the book says, **"And a certain man out of the crowd said to him, Teacher, speak to my brother to divide the inheritance with me. But he said to him, Man, who appointed me a judge or an arbitrator over you?"** (12:13-14). I quote that passage to show how Jesus never took authority not given him. He only used authority in the temple against the merchants because they had no right from God to be there. After giving the man his response Jesus told a parable to warn against greed. He also warned his disciples to always be prepared for the end.

The Sabbath Day

Next the book says, **"And he was teaching in one of the synagogues on the sabbath day. And behold, there was a woman who had a spirit of infirmity eighteen years. And she was bent over, and not being able to straighten up completely. And when Jesus saw her, he called out, and said to her, Woman, thou are loosed from thine infirmity. And he laid his hands upon her, and immediately she was made straight, and glorified God. And having responded, the synagogue-ruler, being indignant because Jesus healed on the sabbath, answered and said to the multitude, There are six days in which he ought to work. Therefore coming in these, be healed, and not on the day of the sabbath.**

"But the Lord therefore answered him and said, Ye hypocrites, does not each of you on the sabbath loose his ox or his donkey from the stall, and after leading away, give to drink? And ought not this woman, being a daughter of Abraham whom Satan has bound, lo, eighteen years, be loosed from this bond on the day of the sabbath? And as he said these things all those opposing him were shamed, and all the multitude rejoiced for all the glorious things that were done by him" (13:10-17).

After that he described with parables what the kingdom of God was like. He also warned that only a few would be saved, and not everybody who called him Lord would be. Then the

book tells of another time he healed on the sabbath: **"And it came to pass, when he went into the house of a certain man of the chiefs of the Pharisees on a sabbath to eat bread, that they were watching him. And behold, there was a certain man in front of him afflicted with edema. And having responded, Jesus spoke to the lawyers and Pharisees, saying, Is it permitted to heal on the sabbath? But they were silent. And having taken him, he healed him and released him. And having responded, he said to them, Of which of you will a son or an ox fall into a pit, and he will not straightaway lift him out on the day of the sabbath? And they could not answer him back to these things"** (14:1-6).

Jesus taught against seeking the chief places at social gatherings, and he told them to invite the lowly and the afflicted to their feasts. Then he gave a parable to show how many would refuse God's invitation to his kingdom. He also told them they must regard everybody else as inferior to him, including their loved ones and even themselves. When the Pharisees and scholars murmured because he ate with sinners, he told a parable about a man seeking his lost sheep. He also told about a woman seeking her lost coin. Then he told the parable about a prodigal son who repented and was received back joyfully by his father. Next he told a parable about a dishonest but shrewd manager. He also said they could not serve God and mammon.

Law and the Good News of Christ

Then he said, **"The law and the prophets were until John. From that time the kingdom of God is proclaimed good news, and every man in it is treated aggressively. But it is easier for the heaven and the earth to pass away, than for one tittle of the law to fall"** (16:17). That is another riddle of Jesus to encourage us to think. He said the law and the prophets (the teachings of the Old Testament) were until John. Then he indicated the law was still in effect. What he meant was that until John knowledge of the will of God came from the Old Testament. Then with John the good news of the kingdom of God began to be proclaimed, but that did not invalidate the law. There was a transition period for the Jews between the time of John and the destruction of the temple and their country. From the time of John the Jews were commanded to repent and become a part of the kingdom of God.

What he said about every man being treated aggressively is simply a statement of the fact that every righteous man suffers some persecution. Indeed, Paul said, **"... all those who want to live devoutly in Christ Jesus will be persecuted"** (Second Timothy 3:12).

Divorce

The book next quotes what Jesus taught about divorce: **"Every man who divorces his wife and marries another, commits adultery, and every man who marries her who has been divorced from a husband commits adultery"** (16:18). That is also found in the book of Matthew. Then he told what happened to a rich man and a poor man in the afterlife. After that he taught lessons about stumbling blocks, forgiveness, faith, and service.

Cleansed Lepers

Then the text says, **"And as he entered into a certain village, ten leprous men who stood from afar met him. And they raised a voice, saying, Jesus, Master, be merciful to us. And when he saw them, he said to them, After departing, display yourselves to the priests. And it came to pass, during their going they were cleansed"** (17:12-14). Jesus continued to command men to keep the requirements of the law. After that Jesus taught more things, including warnings to be prepared for the end, being persistent in prayer, and not being self-righteousness.

The Ten Commandments

After reporting those things the text says, **"And a certain ruler questioned him, saying, Good teacher, having done what, will I inherit eternal life? And Jesus said to him, Why do thou call me good? None is good except one, God. Thou know the commandments. Thou shall not commit adultery. Thou shall not murder. Thou shall not steal. Thou shall not give false testimony. Honor thy father and thy mother. And he said, All these things I have kept from my youth. And when he heard these things, Jesus said to him, Yet one thing is lacking from thee. Sell all things, as many as thou have, and distribute to the poor, and thou will have treasure in heaven. And come, follow me. But when he heard these things, he became very sorrowful, for he was very rich"** (18:18-23). That story is also told in the book of Matthew.

After saying those things Jesus warned about how hard it was for rich men to enter into the kingdom of God. When Peter reminded him how they had forsaken everything to follow him, Jesus told of the rewards that would bring to them. Then he told them he was going to be killed in Jerusalem, but would rise the third day.

After that he healed a blind man. Then he went in the house of a rich tax collector named Zacchaeus to eat with him. When he was criticized because of it he reminded them the man was also a son of Abraham. Then he told a parable about bondmen being given different numbers of talents to invest by trading. Then he made a grand entrance into Jerusalem accompanied by a large multitude praising him. After which he entered the temple and drove out the merchants. The Jewish leaders later demanded to know who gave him authority to do those things. However, he refused to answer because they would not answer a question he asked them. Then he told a parable against them.

Later the Pharisees sent men to trap him with questions, but they failed. The Sadducees also asked him a question they thought he could not answer, but he showed how ignorant they were. So none of them dared ask him any more questions. He saw a poor widow cast a small amount into the temple treasury. So he told his disciples she gave more than the larger amounts the rich were giving because it was all she had. Then he told of the destruction of the temple and Jerusalem, and also of the end of the world. And he warned them to be prepared for the end. Some time later Judas sought how to betray him.

Passover and the New Covenant

Next the book says, **"And the day of unleavened bread came during which it was necessary to kill the Passover. And he sent Peter and John, saying, After departing, prepare the Passover for us, that we may eat"** (22:7-8). During the last supper with his apostles Jesus told them of his coming betrayal, crucifixion, and resurrection. And he encouraged them. He also instituted the memorial supper for him. Those things are also told in Matthew. After describing his trial and crucifixion, the text says, **"And the day was Preparation; sabbath was beginning. And having followed closely, the women who were gathered to him out of Galilee, they saw the sepulcher, and how his body was laid. And having returned, they prepared spices and ointments. And they indeed rested on the sabbath according to the commandment. And on the first day of the week, very early morning, they came to the sepulcher bringing the spices that they prepared, and some women with them"** (23:54-24:1). That is the last reference in the book of Luke about anything in the law.

After his resurrection Jesus appeared to a few of his disciples, including his apostles, and he gave them final instructions to stay in Jerusalem until they were clothed with power from on high. That power was given them on the day of Pentecost when his church was established by the first sermon of Peter.

Part 3:4

LAW IN JOHN

JESUS AND THE LAW

This book first describes the divinity of Jesus, and it contrasts him with John the immerser. Then it contrasts the law of Moses with the good news of Christ with this statement: **"Because the law was given through Moses. Grace and truth came to be through Jesus Christ"** (1:17). The book then tells a little about the ministry of John the immerser, and how he identified Jesus as the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. Then it tells how Jesus began to call his apostles. After that it tells how Jesus turned water into wine at a wedding.

THE PASSOVER

Next the book says, **"And the Passover of the Jews was near, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem"** (2:13). It tells how he drove out the merchants in the temple. Remember, he did that more than once, because apparently the merchants returned every time he traveled away from Jerusalem. When the Jews demanded a sign from him, he told them if they destroyed the temple he would raise it in three days. He meant the temple of his body.

A ruler of the Jews named Nicodemus came to him one night and confessed faith in him. Jesus told him how a man must be begotten from water and Spirit to enter the kingdom of God, but Nicodemus did not understand. Jesus also told how God loved the world and sent his Son so that every man who believed in him could be saved. After those things the book tells how John the immerser taught of the superiority of Jesus. Then it tells how Jesus taught a Samaritan woman he met at a well. Her testimony brought others to him from the nearby Samaritan city, and they believed in him. After departing Samaria he went to Galilee and healed a man's son. Then he returned to Jerusalem.

THE SABBATH DAY

After that the text tells how he healed a man unable to walk: **"Jesus says to him, Arise, take up thy bed and walk. And straightaway the man became well, and took up his bed and walked. Now it was sabbath on that day. The Jews therefore said to the man who was cured, It is sabbath. It is not permitted for thee to take up the bed. He answered them, The man who made me well, that man said to me, Take up thy bed and walk. … And because of this the Jews persecuted Jesus, and sought to kill him, because he did these things on a sabbath. But Jesus answered them, My Father works until now and I work. Because of this therefore the Jews sought even more to kill him, because not only did he relax the sabbath, but also he called God his own Father, making himself equal to God"** (5:8-18). Jesus never violated the sabbath as God commanded it. It was the traditions of the Jews, and their excessive legalism that he ignored.

Moses Wrote About Jesus

In his defense against accusations that he violated the sabbath, Jesus gave many arguments to verify his claim of divinity, his divine mission, and his support by the heavenly Father. One of the things he said was, **"Think not that I will accuse you to the Father. The man who accuses you is Moses, in whom ye have hoped. For if ye believed Moses, ye would have believed me, for that man wrote about me. But if ye believe not the writings of that man, how will ye believe my sayings?"** (5:45-47). The Israelites had never been faithful to all the laws of Moses.

Another Passover

Next the book tells of a time when Jesus went to the other side of the sea of Galilee. And it says, **"Now the Passover, the feast of the Jews, was near"** (6:4). A great multitude came to him and he fed them all with five barley loaves and two fishes. When they saw what he did they tried to take him by force and make him king, but he departed to a mountain alone. His disciples were in a boat crossing the sea, and that evening he went to them walking on the water. Later the multitude followed him across the sea. Jesus rebuked them, saying they sought him not because of the signs but because they ate and were filled. And he began to speak of himself as the bread from heaven. He eventually caused many to leave him when he told them they had to eat his flesh and drink his blood to obtain eternal life. He explained to them those were figurative words, but most did not understand and were offended. It was an effective way to prune the dead wood from his followers.

The Feast of Tabernacles

Jesus remained in Galilee because the Jews sought to kill him. Then the book says, **"Now the feast of the Jews, the feast of tabernacles, was near. His brothers therefore said to him, Depart from here, and go into Judea so that thy disciples also may see thy works that thou do. For no man does anything in secret, and he himself seeks to be in public. If thou do these things, show thyself to the world. For not even his brothers believed in him. Jesus therefore says to them, My time is not yet here, but your time is always ready. The world cannot hate you, but it hates me because I testify about it, that its works are evil. Go ye up to this feast. I am not yet going to this feast, because my time is not yet fulfilled. And having said these things to them, he remained in Galilee. But when his brothers went up, then he also went up to the feast, not openly, but as in private. … And when it was now in the middle of the feast, Jesus went up into the temple and taught"** (7:2-14). He said to his brothers that the world could not hate them, meaning they could not hate them as unbelievers. The sons of Israel were commanded to attend the three annual feasts, one of which was the feast of tabernacles. And Jesus was always careful to obey the laws of Moses.

Not Keeping the Law

During his teaching in the temple Jesus told the people how they were not faithful to the laws of Moses: **"Jesus said, Did not Moses give you the law, and none of you does the**

law? Why do ye seek to kill me? The multitude answered and said, Thou have a demon. Who seeks to kill thee?" (7:19-20). When he said none of them did the law he meant keeping it fully. For just as today they were careful to obey some of the laws, but none of them kept the law fully. If none of them kept all the laws, Jesus wanted to know why they sought to kill him because they thought he violated some of them. That was just another example of their hypocrisy about the law. As they do today they wanted to choose what to obey and what to ignore. And to make themselves seem pious they were strict about the ones they chose to obey.

CIRCUMCISION

Then he spoke to them about doing things on the sabbath. The Jews frequently accused Jesus of violating the sabbath, so he was defending himself. He said, **"Moses has given you circumcision (not that it is from Moses, but from the fathers), and ye circumcise a man on a sabbath. If a man receives circumcision on a sabbath, so that the law of Moses may not be loosed, are ye angry with me because I made a man entirely well on a sabbath? Judge not according to appearance, but judge righteous judgment"** (7:22-24). He explained what he was doing was not a true violation of the sabbath. Circumcision was commanded for Abraham and his posterity before it was given in the law of Moses.

ADULTERY

Jesus continued to teach the people in the temple to believe in him. Then the book says, **"And the scholars and the Pharisees bring to him a woman taken in adultery. And having stood her in the midst, tempting, they say to him, Teacher, we found this woman committing adultery, in the act. Now in the law, Moses commanded us such women are to be stoned. What therefore do thou say about her? But they said this, trying him, so that they might have an accusation against him. But Jesus having stooped down, wrote on the ground with his finger, not pretending. And when they continued asking him, after standing erect, he said to them, Let the innocent man of you first cast the stone at her. And again having stooped down, he wrote on the ground. And they, having heard and being convicted by their conscience, went out one by one, having begun from the elder until the last. And Jesus was left behind alone, and the woman being in the midst. And Jesus, after standing erect, and having seen no man but the woman, he said to her, Woman, where are those accusers of thee? Did no man condemn thee? And she said, No man, Lord. And Jesus said to her, Neither do I condemn thee. Go, and henceforth sin no more"** (8:3-11).

Jesus did not condemn her, because all her accusers were equally guilty. They had just not been caught. The prophet Hosea quoted Jehovah saying to his people, **"I will not punish your daughters when they play the harlot, nor your brides when they commit adultery. For themselves go apart with harlots, and they sacrifice with the prostitutes. And the people who do not understand shall be overthrown"** (Hosea 4:14). When most everybody is guilty, God will not punish only those who are caught. That would be a mockery of justice. He will punish (overthrow) the whole community.

Witnesses

Jesus told the Jews he was the light of the world, and whoever follows him would not walk in darkness. Then the book says, **"The Pharisees therefore said to him, Thou testify about thyself. Thy testimony is not valid. Jesus answered and said to them, Even if I might testify about myself, my testimony is valid, for I know where I came from and where I go, but ye do not know where I come from and where I go. Ye judge according to the flesh. I judge no man. But even if I judge, my judgment is valid, because I am not alone, but I and the Father who sent me. And also it is written in your law that the testimony of two men is valid. I am he who testifies about myself, and the Father who sent me testifies about me"** (8:13-18). The law required at least two witnesses. Therefore, a single testimony was not considered valid.

Jesus continued to teach them to believe in him. However, the people were divided about it; some believed and some did not. He rebuked those who did not believe by saying they were from their father, the devil. Among many other things, he said he existed before Abraham. Upon hearing that they took up stones against him, but he departed from them.

The Sabbath Day

While he was walking he saw a man born blind, and he told him how to be healed. When those who knew the man saw him afterward they were astonished, and they brought him to the Pharisees. The book says, **"Now it was a sabbath when Jesus made the clay and opened his eyes. Again therefore the Pharisees also asked him how he received sight. And he said to them, He put clay upon my eyes, and I washed, and I see. Therefore some of the Pharisees said, This man is not from God, because he does not keep the sabbath. Other men said, How is a sinful man able to do such signs? And there was division among them"** (9:14-16). The Pharisees sent for his parents to confirm he had been born blind. Then they asked him again how he was able to see. He said he already told them but they would not listen. They eventually threw him out because he insisted Jesus was a prophet. When Jesus learned of it he said, **"For judgment I came into this world, so that those not seeing might see, and those who see might become blind"** (9:39).

Being Attracted to Jesus

Jesus spoke of his disciples as sheep and himself as the good shepherd. And he said to the Jews who did not believe in him, **"But ye do not believe, for ye are not of my sheep, as I said to you. My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me"** (10:26-27). All men who love the laws of God's righteousness are the sheep of Jesus. They are the humble and gentle souls of the world who love their neighbors and seek to do good and live right. And all such men will be receptive to the teachings of the good news of Jesus Christ. They will be drawn to him when they learn about him and his teachings, and they will accept him.

Jesus is not attractive to men who have not the love of truth and righteousness in their hearts. Indeed, as the unbelieving Jews were, they are repelled by him. For he testifies that

their deeds are evil, and he exposes them. And tragically, that describes most of the world. For Jesus said to his disciples at the last supper, **"If the world hates you, know that it has hated me before you.** (15:18). When Jesus spoke to the Jews about how his disciples were his sheep and he was their good shepherd, the book says there was a division among the Jews because of those words. There will always be division in the world about Jesus, because the world is divided into those who love the laws of God's righteousness, and those who hate those laws.

The Feast of the Dedication

Next the book says, **"And the feast of the dedication happened at Jerusalem, and it was winter"** (10:22). That feast was created by Judas Maccabeus about thirteen hundred years after Moses, and is not mentioned in the Old Testament. Therefore it was not a part of the law of Moses but was a tradition they had added. Of course, the creation of synagogues was not commanded by the law either. Religious traditions are only wrong when they compete with the commandments of God or are made compulsory.

When Jesus was in the temple during that time, the Jews surrounded him and demanded to know if he were the Christ. He said he told them but they did not believe. He said they could not believe because they were not of his sheep. When he said he and the Father were one, they took up stones against him. When he asked why, they said it was because he made himself God. He replied, **"Is it not written in your law, I said, ye are gods? If he designated those men gods, for whom the word of God came to be (and the scripture cannot be broken), whom the Father made holy and sent into the world, do ye say, Thou blaspheme, because I said, I am the Son of God? If I am not doing the works of my Father, do not believe me. But if I am doing them, even though ye do not believe me, believe the works, that ye may know and believe that the Father is in me, and I in him"** (10:34-38). What Jesus quoted is not found in the law of Moses, but is in Psalm 82. That means when Jesus referred to the law he sometimes meant passages of scripture elsewhere in the Old Testament. Other men of the New Testament also used the word law in that broad sense.

His Final Passover

Jesus departed Jerusalem because the Jews sought to kill him. However, he returned after Lazarus the brother of Mary and Martha died; they were among his faithful disciples. He arrived at the sepulcher four days after his death, but he brought him back to life anyway. That miracle so alarmed the chief priests and Pharisees that they sought all the more to kill him. Therefore, Jesus no longer walked openly among the Jews, but went to a city near the wilderness.

Next the book says, **"Now the Passover of the Jews was near, and many went up to Jerusalem out of the countryside before the Passover, so that they might purify themselves"** (11:55). Six days before the Passover Jesus went to Bethany near Jerusalem and ate with Lazarus and his sisters. Mary anointed him with costly ointment, and Judas rebuked

her, saying it could have been sold and given to the poor. However, Jesus defended and praised her.

The following day as he approached Jerusalem a great multitude of those who had come to the feast went out to accompany him, taking palm branches and praising him as he came. They had heard how he raised Lazarus from the dead. Jesus began to talk about being lifted up from the earth and drawing all men to himself. And he encouraged the multitude to walk in the light so they could be sons of light. The book says that many still did not believe, and it quotes the prophet Isaiah who said God had blinded their eyes. However, many did believe, but because of the Pharisees they would not confess him.

Jesus made some final words to encourage the people to believe in him. Then the book says, **"Now before the feast of the Passover, Jesus, having seen that his hour has come that he would depart out of this world to his Father, having loved his own in the world, he loved them to the end"** (13:1). After the Passover meal was eaten Jesus washed the feet of his apostles. Then he said one of them would betray him. John asked Jesus to show him who it was, and Jesus indicated it was Judas Iscariot. Then he told Judas to do quickly what he would. So Judas departed into the night. After that Jesus spoke many words of encouragement to his apostles. He also used an analogy of a grapevine, where his Father was the farmer, he was the vine, and they were branches of it.

He also warned them how they would be hated by men, and he quoted a prophetic passage from Psalm 69. He said, **"But, that the word that is written in their law may be fulfilled, They hated me without cause"** (15:25). That is another example of when the word law refers to all of the Old Testament. Jesus also warned them they would be scattered from him when he was betrayed. Yet they insisted they would be loyal. He continued to encourage them. Then he spoke a lengthy prayer in their presence asking God to protect them, bless them, and keep them united with him. After his prayer he went to the garden where he was betrayed.

After describing his mock trial the book says, **"They lead Jesus therefore from Caiaphas to the Praetorium. And it was early, and they did not enter into the Praetorium, so that they would not be defiled, but that they might eat the Passover. Pilate therefore went out to them, and said, What accusation do ye bring against this man?"** (18:29). That passage illustrates the utter contempt Jews of that time had for Gentiles. The law of Moses says nothing about being defiled in such a place. It was simply a fortress.

Pilate tried to release Jesus but the demands of the crowd and the Jewish rulers caused him to order the crucifixion. Among other things, the text says, **"When therefore Jesus received the vinegar, he said, It is finished, and after bowing his head, he gave up the spirit. The Jews therefore, so that the bodies would not remain on the cross on the sabbath, since it was Preparation (for it was the high day of that sabbath), they besought Pilate that their legs might be broken, and they might be removed"** (19:30-31). The law forbad leaving a dead man hanging over night. The next day was a sabbath, and if he died on the sabbath they could not bury him that day. Breaking their bones apparently hastened

their death; I am told it caused suffocation. They did not break Jesus' legs because he was already dead.

That "Preparation" was apparently a traditional time when they prepared for the sabbath. There were many things they had restricted themselves from doing on the sabbath in addition to what was forbidden in the law. I am told that preparation period was a few hours just before the 6 PM that began the sabbath. That sabbath was probably called a "high day" because it was part of the feast of unleavened bread, which always began on Passover. The Passover did not fall on a particular day of the week. It was simply the fourteenth day of their first month, whatever day of the week it might be. For that particular day Passover fell on a Friday. After that the book tells how he appeared to his disciples after his resurrection.

Part 3:5

LAW IN ACTS

The book begins by describing Jesus' last instructions to his apostles. After they saw him ascend into heaven they returned to Jerusalem, as they had been commanded, **"to wait for the promise of the Father"** (1:4). While waiting they chose a replacement for Judas. Then the book tells how they were endowed with power from on high on the day of Pentecost. That gave them the ability to speak in "tongues," meaning all who heard them speak heard in their native language. It was a truly spectacular thing, because there were men from many different countries that spoke other languages. When a multitude gathered because of it, Peter preached about Jesus and testified of his resurrection.

MOSES AND JESUS

Among Peter's words he said, **"For Moses indeed said to the fathers, the Lord our God will raise up a prophet for you, from your brothers, like me. Ye shall hear him in all things, as many as he might speak to you. And every soul, whichever it will be, if it will not hear that prophet will be utterly destroyed from the people"** (3:22-23). He said that prophet was Jesus. At the end of his sermon many believed, and three thousand souls were added to the church that day. The book says the church continued to grow after that. Then it tells how at the entrance of the temple Peter healed a man lame from birth. John was with him. That miracle attracted much attention, and he preached another sermon. However, the priests, the captain of the temple, and the Sadducees arrested them. Nevertheless, five thousand more were added to the church. The next day they brought Peter and John to the council, where they were commanded not to proclaim Jesus. They refused that command but were released anyway.

Peter and the other apostles continued to preach and perform miracles of healing. However, the rulers of the Jews became envious and they cast the apostles into prison. Nevertheless, an agent from heaven freed them and told them to continue preaching. So they went to the temple. The rulers sent for them, tried them, beat them, commanded them not to speak of Jesus, and then released them again.

Sometime after that a faithful Christian named Stephen was falsely accused and brought before the council of the Jews. His defense was primarily a review of their history. In that review he said, **"This is the Moses who said to the sons of Israel, the Lord our God will raise up a prophet for you, from your brothers, like me. This is he who became in the congregation in the wilderness with the agent who spoke to him on the mount Sinai, and of our fathers who received living oracles to give to us. To whom our fathers did not want to become obedient, but they thrust away, and turned back in their heart to Egypt, after saying to Aaron, Make gods for us who will lead us. For this Moses, who brought us out of the land of Egypt, we know not what has happened to him. And they made a calf in those days, and offered up sacrifice to the idol, and rejoiced in the works of their hands"** (7:37-41).

After his review he rebuked them severely for always resisting the Holy Spirit, persecuting the prophets, and killing the Righteous man (Christ). That accusation enraged the Jews and they stoned him to death. That also began a great persecution of the church in Jerusalem. If a man were to do what Stephen did today, most people who call themselves Christians would condemn him.

Law and the New Covenant

The book says that the persecution scattered many Christians from Jerusalem. Nevertheless, the church continued to grow, and the book describes the conversion of various persons. The disciples also began to convert Samaritans. It also tells how Saul (later called Paul) was ravaging the churches, and casting many Christians into prison, both men and women. However, Jesus appeared to him in a vision on his way to Damascus, and he became a believer. The book then tells how Peter raised a woman from the dead.

After that God called Peter to preach to a Gentile. An agent of God first appeared to Cornelius, a Gentile centurion, telling him to send for Peter. In the meantime Peter had a vision preparing him to go. When Peter entered his house Cornelius fell down before him. The text then says, **"But Peter lifted him up, saying, Stand up. I am also myself a man. And as he conversed with him, he went in and found many who came together. And he said to them, Ye understand how it is unlawful for a Jewish man to fraternize or to visit with a foreign man, and yet God demonstrated to me not to call one man profane or unclean"** (10:26-28). The law Peter referred to was never a part of the law of Moses. It was one the Jews added later because of their intense hatred of Gentiles. Peter immersed Cornelius and his household into Christ, and when he did the Holy Spirit came upon them. Later Peter was forced to defend his actions to the leaders of the church at Jerusalem. However, after they heard his testimony they were persuaded it was from God.

After that the book tells how Herod killed James the brother of John. He also arrested Peter, but an agent from heaven rescued him from prison. Then the book tells how Paul and Barnabus with John Mark began traveling into Gentile lands preaching to them. However, John Mark returned early. There were Jewish synagogues in all of those countries, and they often had Gentile proselytes in them. The text says about one place, **"And after the reading of the law and the prophets the synagogue rulers sent to them, saying, Men, brothers, if there is among you a word of exhortation for the people, speak"** (13:15). Most if not every synagogue had a copy of the Old Testament, but it was rare for an individual to own one. Before the invention of printing in the fifteenth century books were very expensive. Paul always took advantage of opportunities to preach in the synagogues. That usually led to the conversion of many Gentile proselytes, but persecution by the Jews. The Jews were Paul's greatest enemies.

Gentiles and the Law of Moses

The Gentile proselytes were very receptive to the teaching of the good news of Christ. Those proselytes were no doubt attracted to the religion of the Jews because of its great superiority to the pagan religions of their day. Therefore, they were all the more receptive to

the new covenant of Christ. They were men who obviously had a love for the righteousness of God, so much so that they were willing to forsake the pagan religions of their own nations. And they could see how the new covenant was much superior to the old covenant with its laws of Moses. Therefore, it was easier for them to accept the good news of Christ.

After converting many Gentiles and a few Jews Paul and Barnabus returned to their home base in Antioch. The book next tells how certain men from Judea began insisting the Gentile Christians be circumcised. Paul and Barnabus disagreed, and so they went to a conference with the apostles and other leaders of the church in Jerusalem about the matter. The text says, **"And when much debate occurred, Peter having risen up, he said to them, Men, brothers, ye know that from past days among us, God chose the Gentiles to hear through my mouth the word of the good news, and to believe. And God, who knows the heart, testified to them, having given them the Holy Spirit, just as also to us. And he made not one distinction between both us and them, having purified their hearts by faith. Now therefore why do ye challenge God, to place a yoke upon the neck of the disciples, which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear? But through the grace of the Lord Jesus, we believe to be saved, in the same way as those men also"** (15:7-11).

After those words Paul and Barnabus described to them all the signs and wonders God did among the Gentiles. Then James spoke and said, **"Men, brothers, hear me. Simeon described how God first came to help, to take from the Gentiles a people for his name. And to this the words of the prophets agree, as it is written, After these things I will return, and I will rebuild the tabernacle of David that has fallen. And I will rebuild the things of it that have been demolished, and I will restore it, so that the rest of men might seek the Lord, and all the Gentiles upon whom my name is called upon them, says the Lord, who does these things. Known to God from the age are all his works.**

"Therefore I judge not to trouble those from the Gentiles who are turning to God, but to write to them, to abstain from the pollutions of idols, and from fornication, and from what is strangled, and from blood. For Moses from generations past, has from city to city those who preach him, being read in the synagogues on every sabbath" (15:13-21).

That judgment was embraced unanimously. Notice the Gentiles were exempt from obeying the law of Moses except for those few things. However, the Jews were to continue with the whole law, as indicated by the statement that the writing of Moses was read in the synagogues every sabbath. Nevertheless, when the temple was destroyed and the Jews were driven from their country the law of Moses was no longer the law of the land. And that was the end of the law of Moses as a legal system forever. God has made it impossible to obey.

After going back and giving that report to the church in Antioch, Paul and Barnabus planned to return to the Gentile lands to check on the new churches there and continue spreading the good news of Christ. However, they went separately because of a dispute. Barnabus wanted to take Mark again, but Paul did not agree because Mark had abandoned them the first time. So Paul took Silas instead, and they went to many places and suffered much persecution. However, they also made many converts. In Athens Paul preached at the

Areopagus, which was a forum there. Among his words, he said, **"Indeed therefore having overlooked the times of ignorance, God now commands for all men everywhere to repent"** (17:30). That is further evidence the law of Moses as a legal system was not required of all men when it was given, but only for the sons of Israel. The laws of that legal system were intended to make Israel the most exalted of all nations because they were his people. God allowed the Gentiles to live with their own laws to help show the superiority of his. However, as Paul said, those times are past, and God now requires every man to believe and obey his Son Jesus Christ.

Jews and the Law of Moses

The book describes many other things Paul did in his missionary travels among the Gentile nations. However, the time came when Paul wanted to return to Jerusalem to preach there. He had a strong love for his countrymen in spite of how much he was persecuted by them. He wanted to try to save them. Therefore, he traveled to Jerusalem and met with the leaders of the church there. He first described how successful they had been among the Gentiles.

Then the text says, **"And when the men heard, they glorified God, having said to him, Thou see, brother, how many thousands there are of the Jews who have believed, and they are all zealots of the law. And they were informed about thee, that thou teach all the Jews throughout the nations desertion from Moses, telling them not to circumcise the children nor to walk by the customs. What is it therefore? Certainly the multitude needs to get together, for they will hear that thou have come.**

"Therefore do this that we say to thee. Four men are with us who have a vow on themselves. Having taken these, be purified with them. And pay expenses for them, so that they may shave the head. And all may know, that things of which they have been informed about thee, are nothing, but thou thyself also walk orderly, keeping the law. And about the Gentiles who have believed, we sent word, having decided for them to keep no such thing, except for them to guard against what is sacrificed to idols, and from blood, and from what is strangled, and from fornication" (21:20-25).

Notice how they said the Jewish Christians were zealots of the law. And they wanted them to know how Paul was not against their obedience of that law. Indeed, it says that Paul himself walked orderly and kept the law. That was only during the interim period between the establishment of the church and the destruction of the Jewish nation.

Paul was not able to stay in Jerusalem long because some Jews recognized him in the temple and caused a riot. The Jews there were about to kill Paul, but the Romans rescued him. However they also arrested him, and accused him of causing the riot. When the Roman captain gave Paul permission to speak to the mob, they listened quietly until he said Jesus told him to go to the Gentiles. When they heard that they rioted again. Their hatred of Gentiles was strong, and their civility was weak. The Jewish leaders even rioted among themselves during his first trial when the Pharisees and Sadducees argued about whether there is an afterlife and a spirit world. The text says, **"And a great conflict having developed, the chief captain, having been alarmed lest Paul might be torn apart by them, commanded the**

soldiers to go down and take him away from the midst of them, and bring him into the fort" (23:10). That shows the depth of barbarism that had become a part of their culture. No wonder the Jews had a bad reputation among Gentiles. I am beginning to see that about my own country after they abandoned Christ and became pagan.

Soon after that chaotic hearing the captain had to send Paul to Caesarea because of a conspiracy by the Jews to ambush and kill him in Jerusalem. He remained in Caesarea several years in custody while the Romans decided what to do with him. They wanted to release Paul, but the rulers of the Jews kept demanding his life. And "**wanting to lay down favors to the Jews"** (24:27) they kept Paul in custody. He eventually appealed Caesar because as a Roman citizen he had that right.

The book tells about a terrible storm and shipwreck he experienced on his way to Rome. After he arrived there he met with members of the church. It also tells how he met with Jews: **"And having appointed a day for him, more came to him into his lodging, to whom he expounded, solemnly testifying the kingdom of God, and persuading them of the things about Jesus, both from the law of Moses and the prophets, from morning until evening. And some were convinced by the things that were spoken, and some disbelieved"** (28:23-24). The book ends by saying he dwelt in Rome two years awaiting his trial before Caesar.

Part 3:6

LAW IN ROMANS

UNIVERSAL GUILT

Paul wrote much about the law in his letter to the Romans, contrasting law with the new covenant of Christ. The first thing he said about law in this letter was that the Jews, who had the law of Moses, were no more righteous than the Gentiles. And he said both Jews and Gentiles would be judged according to how they had lived. He said God would **"render to each man according to his works ..."** (2:6). Then he told how God was impartial: **"For there is no partiality with God. For as many as have sinned without law will also be destroyed without law, and as many as have sinned in law will be judged by law. For the hearers of the law are not righteous with God, but the doers of the law will be made righteous"** (2:11-13).

THE COMMON LAW OF GOD

Then he wrote about our instinctive knowledge of the law: **"For when the Gentiles who have no law do by nature the things of the law, these men, not having law, are a law to themselves. Who show the work of the law written in their hearts, testifying of their conscience, and their thoughts amidst each other accusing or also defending them in a day when God judges the secrets of men by Jesus Christ, according to my good news"** (2:14-16). The law of God is about righteousness. And Paul said the awareness of God's laws of righteousness is innate to men. Children need no laws to tell them that kindness and fairness are good; such knowledge of the basic laws of righteousness is common to man. Of course, neither children nor adults always practice kindness and fairness. We all sometimes violate our conscience, and some evil souls even destroy theirs.

Paul went on to say, **"Behold, thou are called a Jew, and rely upon the law, and boast in God, and know his will, and approve the things that are significant, being instructed out of the law. And thou have confidence in thyself to be a guide of the blind, a light of those in darkness, a corrector of the foolish, a teacher of the childlike, having in the law the essence of knowledge and truth …"** (2:17-20). We all have the work of the law written in our hearts, but innate knowledge is primitive and inadequate. Acquired knowledge of righteousness is far superior. For the Bible teaches, **"Man will not live on bread alone, but on every word coming out through the mouth of God"** (Deuteronomy 8:3 and Matthew 4:4), which means the Holy Bible. And the law of Moses contains much knowledge about God's righteousness. Remember, Paul said the law contained the **"essence of knowledge and truth,"** meaning knowledge and truth about righteousness. Knowing the laws of Moses educates a man about true righteousness. (Remember, the word law is used in many different ways, as explained in the Introduction. Therefore, be careful to understand how the word law is used in any passage of scripture.)

KEEPING THE LAW

After describing how knowledgeable the Jews were about righteousness, because they knew the law, Paul said, **"… thou therefore who teach another, do thou not teach thyself? Thou who preach not to steal, do thou steal? Thou who say not to commit adultery, do thou commit adultery? Thou who abhor idols, do thou rob temples? Thou who boast in law, dishonor God by thy transgression of the law. For the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you, just as it is written"** (2:21-24). Remember, knowledge of law is no guarantee of righteousness.

Paul then told them that being a Jew was not a matter of the flesh (a particular race), but being obedient to the teachings of the law. He said, **"For circumcision is indeed beneficial if thou perform law, but if thou are a transgressor of law, thy circumcision has become uncircumcision. If therefore a man of uncircumcision keeps the ordinances of the law, will not his uncircumcision be considered circumcision? And the man of natural uncircumcision who fulfills the law, will judge thee, a transgressor of law through a document and circumcision. For he is not a Jew in what is visible, nor is circumcision in what is visible, in flesh, but he is a Jew in what is hidden, and circumcision is of the heart, in spirit not a document, whose praise is not from men but from God"** (2:25-29).

Circumcision was necessary for a man to be a part of the nation of Israel, which was formerly the chosen people of God. However, Paul said if they transgressed the law their circumcision was invalidated, and they would even be judged by uncircumcised Gentiles who keep the law. He said true circumcision is invisible, meaning figurative. It is circumcision of the heart (our inner mind), not the flesh, that is necessary for a man to be a part of the new chosen people of God, the church. A circumcised heart is one that repents and puts away the fleshly mind, the worldly mind of sin.

Paul had been showing how there was no difference between the Jews and the Gentiles in being righteous before God. He then asked what was the advantage of the Jew, and the benefit of circumcision. He answered, **"Much every way. First, because they were indeed entrusted with the oracles of God. For what if some did not believe? Will their unbelief make the assurance of God ineffective? May it not happen! But let it come to pass God is true, but every man a liar, as it is written, That thou may ever be justified in thy words, and may prevail when thou are criticized"** (3:2-4). The Holy Bible, the word of God, was written entirely by the sons of Israel. Moreover, regardless of their general unfaithfulness God has always kept the promises of his words, including sending them his only begotten Son. Therefore, God can never be justly criticized. As the psalmist said, only foolish men criticize him: **"Arise, O God, plead thine own cause. Remember how the foolish man reproaches thee all the day"** (Psalm 74:22).

It is foolish ignorance when men claim their values are superior to God's. A modern example is the matter of capital punishment for murder. Long before the law of Moses, God commanded all murderers be executed. However, men now commonly claim executing anybody, including murderers, is barbaric and unbecoming of civilized people. Therefore,

they claim a morality superior to that of God. Nevertheless, remember the scripture that says, **"Be not misled, God is not mocked, for whatever a man sows this he will also reap"** (Galatians 6:7). Countries that swiftly execute murderers have a far smaller rate of murders, including our own country in former times. God's ways always prove best when they are applied properly. Be not misled by the deceit of his enemies.

Paul continued his reasoning: **"But if our unrighteousness commends the righteousness of God, what will we say? Is God unrighteous inflicting wrath? (I speak according to a man.) May it not happen! Otherwise how will God judge the world? For if by my lie, the truth of God abounded to his glory, why am I also still judged as sinful, and not (as we are slandered, and as some affirm us to say) that we may do evil so that good things may come (whose condemnation is just)?"** (3:5-8). Our unrighteousness contrasts with God's righteousness, thereby proving his moral superiority and the full justification of his judgments. And just because our evil proves his goodness that does not mean we should be rewarded for providing that proof by escaping his wrath. That evil argument was apparently brought against Paul. And disciples of the devil continue to pervert what we say.

Paul continued to show how Jews and Gentiles were both guilty before God, and he quoted several Old Testament passages in support of that conclusion. Then he said, **"Now we know that as many things as the law says, it says to those in the law, so that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become accountable to God. Because from works of law no flesh will be made right before him, for through law is knowledge of sin"** (3:19-20).

Our souls are not condemned by God for offenses committed in ignorance, for Jesus said, **"If ye were blind, ye would have no sin ..."** (John 9:41). Remember, however, we are all born with some innate knowledge of law (right and wrong). Although it takes time to develop in us, as the prophet Isaiah indicated when he said, **"For before the child shall know to refuse the evil, and choose the good …"** (Isaiah 7:16), and that innate conscience can be seared even early in life. Nevertheless, we all willfully sin eventually, and therefore become accountable to God. Hence, works of law can never make us right before him because we all violate it in some way. And a single infraction makes us guilty, just as it only takes one crack in a glass bottle to ruin it. Only Jesus Christ was justified by works of law because he remained flawless, without sin, but he was more than a mere man. For all other men righteousness before God can never come from works of law.

Law and Faith

No man can be made righteous from works of law, because it is through law that we all become guilty. And just as with Adam a single infraction condemns us. Our only hope of salvation, Paul said, was through faith in Jesus: **"But now a righteousness of God has been manifested independent of law, being witnessed by the law and the prophets. And the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ is for all and upon all those who believe, for there is no distinction. For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God, being made righteous freely by his grace …"** (3:21-24). Salvation is only through

faith in Jesus Christ. And it is a free gift from God for all men who believe because all have fallen short of obedience to law.

Salvation is only through Christ because only he can redeem us. For Paul said the gift of God's grace was **"through the redemption in Christ Jesus, whom God set forth an expiatory sacrifice through faith in his blood ..."** (3:24). Paul said Christ was an expiatory sacrifice. It was through the sacrifice of his blood that we can have redemption. Redemption involves recovering something by paying the debt against it. What Jesus paid was our debts to God caused by our sins. For part of what we call the Lord's prayer asks God to **"forgive us our debts as we also forgive our debtors"** (Matthew 6:12). And that redemption of our debts comes from faith in the blood of Christ. There is much more to be said about how the justice and righteousness of God was proven by our redemption through Christ, which you can read about in Part 4:1.

Since no man can be made righteous by his own works, then no man can boast about himself. For Paul said, **"Where then is the boasting? It is excluded. By what law, of works? No, but by a law of faith. We therefore consider a man to be made righteous by faith independent of works of law. Or is God of Jews only and not also of Gentiles? Yes, of Gentiles also, since God is one, who will make the man of circumcision righteous from faith, and the man of uncircumcision through faith"** (3:27-30). No man can boast of being righteous simply by obeying the laws of God, because no mere man can obey them perfectly. As Paul said, **"... all** [Jews and Gentiles] **have sinned and come short of the glory of God"** (3:23). It is not obedience to God's laws that makes a man righteous; it is an obedient faith in him.

God did not give his laws to the Gentiles the way he did to the sons of Israel. However, that did not mean he had no concern for Gentiles. He is God of all men, and he makes them all righteous from faith, because **"all have sinned and come short of the glory of God."** For it is not law that makes a man righteous before God; it is from faith and through faith. Righteousness comes best from faith, because faith motivates a man to live righteously. Without faith in God even the best laws are useless, as the history of Israel has illustrated. For every time they lost faith in Jehovah they degenerated into sinfulness.

Next Paul said, **"Do we then make law void through faith? May it not happen! Instead, we establish law"** (3:31). Paul was not speaking of law as a legal system, including the one of Moses. He was speaking of law as knowledge of what is good and right. And it is through faith that knowledge of what is good and right is established and then applied. When men believe in God and trust him, they seek knowledge of what is good and right so they can do what pleases him. Thus faith establishes law.

Paul then used the example of Abraham, the founding father of the Hebrews: **"What then will we say Abraham, our father according to flesh, to have found? For if Abraham was made righteous from works, he has a boast, but not before God. For what does the scripture say? And Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to him for righteousness. Now to the man being employed, the wage is not reckoned according to grace, but according to obligation. But to the man not being employed, but who believes in**

him who makes the impious man righteous, his faith is reckoned for righteousness. Just as David also tells the blessedness of the man to whom God imputes righteousness independent of works, saying, Blessed are those whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. Blessed is a man to whom the Lord does, no, not impute sin" (4:1-8).

As righteous a man as Abraham was, he was no more able to boast about his behavior being perfect than any other man. Jesus alone was sinless. For the author of Hebrews reported that Jesus **"was tempted in all things in the same way, without sin"** (Hebrews 4:15). Paul said that what made Abraham righteous before God was his faith. Then he explained the difference between faith and works. An employee works for a wage, which is not given as a gift but paid as an obligation. When a man is employed he makes a contract or agreement with his employer to work for a certain wage. That is how salvation by works of law operates. However, if the worker fails to complete the required work then the employer is not obligated to pay the wage. That is why salvation by works of law always fails.

God does not want mere behavior from us. He wants our hearts and our trust. The man who lives only by works of law can receive no forgiveness for failure. Why should he? If he has no faith in God, but only lives by works of law, then he must suffer the penalty of infractions. Anything else is a violation of justice, and God will not violate justice. In a fair legal contract the agreement stands regardless of the outcome, which is how living by works of law operates.

However, the man who lives by faith and trust in God has been forgiven his past sins because Jesus paid the price with his expiatory sacrifice. The iniquities of the man of faith are forgiven, and his sins are covered. And henceforth, he has been adopted by God as a son (see John 1:12 and Romans 8:15), and he will not impute sin against him. The man of faith may offend God, but his infractions are not imputed against him. That means he will not be rejected and condemned. God will chastise him for an infraction (see Hebrews 12:6), but he will not reject him as he does the man who lives by works of law alone. The man of faith is truly blessed, because his faith is reckoned for righteousness, not merely his obedience to law. And unlike the man who lives by works of law, as long as the man of faith keeps his faith his sins are not imputed against him.

Paul then shows how the blessing of Abraham is for all men and not just for the promised offspring of his flesh. He said, **"Is this blessedness therefore upon men of circumcision, or also upon men of uncircumcision? For we say, Faith was reckoned to Abraham for righteousness. How then was it reckoned? When he was in circumcision, or in uncircumcision? Not in circumcision, but in uncircumcision. And he received the sign of circumcision, as a seal of the righteousness of his faith during uncircumcision, for him to be father of all those who believe during uncircumcision (for righteousness to also be imputed to them), and father of those of circumcision, to those not only of circumcision, but also to those who march in the steps of faith—of that during the uncircumcision of our father Abraham. For the promise to Abraham or to his seed, for him to be heir of the world, was not through law, but through a righteousness of faith. For if**

those from law are heirs, faith has been made void, and the promise has been made useless. For the law works wrath" (4:9-15).

Paul explained how Abraham was made righteous, not *after* he was circumcised, but before he was. And Abraham was not given a legal system. It was his faith that made him righteous. Therefore, the heirs of the promise of Abraham are all those who march in the steps of his faith, the circumcised and the uncircumcised. Paul said if Abraham's promise was through law, then **"faith has been made void, and the promise has been made useless."** The promise has been made useless because **"the law works wrath."** It produces wrath from God because everybody violates it to some degree.

No Legal System over Us

Paul then said, **"For where there is no law, neither is there transgression"** (4:15). We cannot break what does not exist. And for those of faith (disciples of Christ) there is no law, meaning no legal system over us. And since there is no longer a legal system over us, then we can no longer become criminals before God. For how can we violate what does not apply to us? John expressed it this way: **"Every man who has been begotten of God is not doing sin, because his seed abides in him, and he cannot sin, because he has been begotten of God"** (First John 3:9). You see, although in our fleshly weakness we may offend God, nevertheless, we cannot commit a crime against him, because we are now his adopted children under grace not under law, and he no longer treats us as criminals when we offend him.

We were all born into this world as sons of God subject to his laws of righteousness, and justice required that we be judged according to that law. Hence, when we sinned and broke any of those laws it was necessary for us to be rejected and condemned in order to fulfill justice. Consequently, our sin caused us to lose our (eternal) sonship. However, our redemption through Christ reconciled us to God, and he adopted us to again be his sons. But this time we are sons not under law but under grace through the redemption of Jesus Christ. We have a new kind of sonship based upon our faith and his grace. Our initial sonship with God was not so based, because this life is a time of trial. And we are not worthy of such an exalted position as sons of God free from law by simply being born a human. Only after proving our worthiness, by faith in Christ, can we obtain his grace for adoption as sons free from law so that God will no longer impute sin against us.

And as long as we remain faithful to Christ we are free from the condemnation of law. As Paul said later in Romans, **"Consequently nothing is condemnation now to those in Christ Jesus, who walk not according to flesh but according to Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus freed me from the law of sin and of death"** (8:1-2), and **"For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God. For ye did not receive a spirit of bondage again for fear, but ye received a spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father"** (8:14-15).

We disciples of Christ are now under what James called the law of liberty: **"So speak ye, and so do ye, as men who are to be judged by a law of liberty"** (James 2:12). Remember,

there are many different kinds of law. The laws of Moses were part of a legal system for the sons of Israel. Gentiles were not judged by that system, but were still held accountable to God by the legal systems they had that contained the laws of God. Even those without a formal legal system were subject to judgment from **"the law written in their hearts"** (2:15). Remember, Paul said that law written in their hearts was **"testifying of their conscience, and their thoughts amidst each other accusing or also defending them in a day when God judges the secrets of men by Jesus Christ, according to my good news"** (2:15-16). Thus all men who are not disciples of Christ will be judged by the laws of God.

The disciples of Christ will not be judged that way because we have an entirely different relationship with God. We are not under any kind of legal system with him (although we are still subject to the legal systems of men). As Paul said to his Roman brothers, **"For ye are not under law, but under grace"** (6:14). We will be judged by the law of liberty, which is not a legal system. And the law of liberty contains no provisions to condemn us. We are men of faith, and God does not impute sin against men of faith in him. Therefore, we cannot be condemned because sin is never imputed against us. Remember, however, God will still chasten us when we offend him.

As sons of God his Spirit dwells in us, and we are judged by the law of liberty. Therefore, we strive to live righteously by obeying his commandments. We do not use that liberty to sin. As Paul said, **"For ye, brothers, were called to liberty, only not liberty for an opportunity to the flesh, but be servants to each other through love"** (Galatians 5:13). One way we show that we are genuine sons of God is by obeying him. For the apostle John said, **"And he who keeps his commandments abides in him, and he in him. And by this we know that he abides in us, from the Spirit that he gave us"** (First John 3:24). If his Spirit truly abides in us we will be led by his Spirit, and so will live righteously. And that means we are not judged by law as other men. As Paul said, **"But if ye are led by the Spirit ye are not under law"** (Galatians 5:18).

In his Roman letter Paul then said, **"Because of this it is from faith, so that it is according to grace, in order for the promise to be sure to all the seed, not only to the seed from the law, but also to the seed from the faith of Abraham, who is father of us all (as it is written, I have made thee a father of many nations), before him whom he believed, of God who makes the dead alive, and who calls things not existing, as existing. Who, against hope, believed in hope, in order for him to become father of many nations according to that which was spoken, So thy seed will be. And not being weak in faith he did not regard his body, which was now deadened (being about a hundred years old), and the deadness of Sarah's womb. And he did not waver in unbelief at the promise of God, but became strong in faith, giving glory to God, and being fully assured that what he promised, he was able also to perform. And therefore it was reckoned to him for righteousness"** (4:16-22).

Salvation can only be earned by living righteously without sin. That is why we cannot earn it. For no man, save Jesus Christ, has the strength and quality of his spirit to be sinless. Salvation is according to his grace as a response to our faith, faith like that of Abraham. God

promised to make Abraham a father of many nations. That is why he is called father of the faithful.

The promise of God to Abraham was a result of his faith, but God severely tested his faith. Had Abraham failed to prove his faith God would not have been obligated to keep his promise to him. One severe test was telling Abraham he would have a son of the promise, but then keeping him without that son until he was a hundred years old and Sarah's womb had long passed the age of childbearing. That is the test Paul mentions here in Romans. Although Abraham was severely tested by that, Paul said he **"became strong in faith, giving glory to God, and being fully assured that what he promised, he was able also to perform."** And God reckoned that faith for righteousness. In that test Abraham did not need to obey any command. All he needed was to keep his faith in God. Other tests, however, did require Abraham to obey commands.

Paul then said those words were written also for us who believe in Christ, so that righteousness can be imputed to us as well: **"Now it was not written because of him alone that it was imputed to him, but also because of us to whom it is going to be imputed, to those who believe in him who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead, who was delivered up for our offenses, and was raised up for our justification. Therefore having been made righteous from faith, we have peace toward God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom also we have access by faith for this grace in which we stand, and we take pride in hope of the glory of God"** (4:23-5:2). The kind of faith we must have is a working faith, faith like Abraham's that survives and grows as we endure the trials and tribulations of this life. That kind of faith is reckoned to us for righteousness, not any efforts by us to perform only works of law.

Moreover, our faith must be steadfast to be acceptable. For when James was writing about wisdom, he said, **"And if any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask from God who gives to all generously and not reproaching, and it will be given to him. But let him ask in faith, doubting nothing, for he who doubts is like a wave of the sea driven by wind and tossed about. For that man should not think that he will receive anything from the Lord, a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways"** (James 1:5-8).

After saying we can now take pride in hope of the glory of God, Paul said, **"And not only so, but we also take pride in our tribulations, knowing that tribulation produces perseverance, and perseverance, character, and character, hope. And hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts through the Holy Spirit that was given to us"** (5:3-5). Tribulations give us opportunities to persevere, and perseverance builds our character, and good character is necessary for our salvation. The hope Paul wrote about is our inner conviction of God's promised reward. It is not the simple hope of wishful thinking. For without character we cannot have that mature hope no matter how much we may want it.

Faith without character will be rewarded like the man in Jesus' parable who would not use his talent (see Matthew 25:25). There are several passages of scripture that teach simple belief is not the faith God wants. True faith is an obedient trust in God, just as was demon-

strated by Abraham. And that requires character, for Paul said our hope is produced by character. Without character there can be no hope. Without character genuine faith is dead, being simple belief which is useless. As James said, **"Thou believe that there is one God, thou do well. The demons also believe, and shudder"** (James 2:19).

Paul then told how Christ died for us, even though we were sinners and enemies of God. It was his expiatory sacrifice that made us righteous, reconciled us to God, and saved us from his wrath. Having been alienated from God because of our offenses against him, Christ purchased us, paid our debts, and reconciled us to God. The greatness of that blessing cannot be appreciated without recognizing what terrible suffering in hell awaits all who remain alienated from God.

Be not deceived. The author of Hebrews warned, **"Watch, that ye not refuse him who speaks. For if those men** [the sons of Israel in the wilderness] **did not escape, having refused him who spoke a divine message on earth, much more we, those who turn away from him from the heavens … . For our God is also a consuming fire"** (Hebrews 12:25-29). Having received such a wondrous salvation Paul said we now take **"pride in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received the reconciliation"** (5:11).

Christ Versus Adam

Paul next contrasted Christ with Adam. He said sin entered into the world because of Adam. And sin brought death, not only for Adam but for all men because all men sin. Then he said, **"For until law sin was in the world, but sin is not imputed when there is no law. Nevertheless death reigned from Adam until Moses, even over those who did not sin in the likeness of Adam's transgression, who is a type of the coming man"** (5:13-14). Just as there are different kinds of law, so there are different kinds of sin. Sin is not imputed when there is no law, but men perished before law because of a different kind of sin. Sin against laws given by command is imputed against men, but not violations against those laws when they are not given. Remember, however, Paul spoke of the laws written on our hearts. And violating those innate laws of righteousness is sin not like Adam's, whose sin was a violation of a direct command. Hence, death reigned even before laws were commanded, because men violated the laws of righteousness written on their hearts.

Paul then said, **"But in this way also, the gift is not as the transgression. For if by the trespass of the one man the many died, much more the grace of God, and the gift in grace of the one man, Jesus Christ, abounded for the many. And the gift is not as through one man who sinned, for indeed the judgment from one man was for condemnation, but the gift from many offenses is for righteousness"** (5:15-16). The sin of Adam caused condemnation for all men, because all men sin. That seems to be why Satan the serpent in the garden of Eden was so eager to cause him to sin; it meant condemnation for all the sons of God. Satan must have known that man's premature knowledge of good and evil would corrupt our flesh and make it impossible for us to always resist temptation. However,

Paul said the gift of grace of Jesus Christ brought salvation to many because that gift made us righteous before God. It paid the debt of our many offenses to him.

Paul continued to contrast the disobedience of Adam with the obedience of Christ: **"For if, by the offense of the one man, death reigned through the one man, much more those who receive the abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the one man, Jesus Christ. So then, as through an offense of one man was for condemnation for all men, so also through a righteousness of one man was for justification of life for all men. For as through the one man's disobedience the many were led sinful, so also through the obedience of the one man the many will be led righteous"** (5:17-19).

Adam's disobedience did not directly cause the condemnation of death for all men. What it did was to greatly increase the potential for disobedience. And that potential is so powerful that all men eventually disobey. Likewise the obedience of Christ did not directly cause many to be righteous. What it did was to remove our (his disciples) subjection to law. As Paul said, **"… we have been released from the law …"** (7:6). And having been released from the law means we can no longer be condemned by it. Our faith in Christ now gives us justification of life, meaning worthiness for eternal salvation, which salvation is impossible without our faith. When Paul said the righteousness of Jesus **"was for justification of life for all men,"** he meant the opportunity for justification was for all men. But tragically, not all men avail themselves of it.

Law Was Given to Increase Sin

Paul then told why the law was given: **"And the law entered so that the offense might abound"** (5:20). In a later passage Paul also said, **"... through the commandment sin might become sinful to extreme"** (7:13). Remember, laws give potential for transgressions, and the more laws there are the greater potential for transgressions. And the greater potential for sin the more sin will become sinful to extreme. But why would God give us something to cause offenses to abound and sin to become sinful to extreme?

First, you need to understand that God has confined this world under sin. For Paul said later in Romans, **"For God has confined all men in disobedience, so that he might be merciful to all"** (11:32). He also said in his letter to the Galatians, **"... scripture confined all things under sin, so that the promise from faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe"** (Galatians 3:21-22). Hence, all things are confined under sin, including all men.

God does not sin and he does not want us to sin. Yet he confined all men under sin. Why? Paul said it was **"so that he might be merciful to all."** And when Paul said the whole creation was made subject to futility, he said it was because of hope: **"For the creation was made subject to futility, not willingly, but because of him who subjected it in hope. Because the creation itself will also be freed from the bondage of corruption into the liberty of the glory of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation is groaning and travailing together until now. And not only so, but also ourselves who**

have the first fruit of the Spirit. And we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for adoption, the redemption of our body" (8:20-23).

God confined all men under sin so that he could bless those who love him and curse those who hate him. Life in this world proves the moral and spiritual superiority of God's Son Jesus Christ, because he was the only man who could or ever will live here without sin. His sinless life here proved his moral and spiritual superiority, and it earned him the right to become our Redeemer and save us from the condemnation of our sins.

Hence, God is **"merciful to all,"** merciful to all who will believe and obey Jesus Christ. Those who love God will believe in him; those who hate God will reject him. Hence, through Christ, God is able with perfect justice to bless those who love him and curse those who hate him.

God curses those who hate him because they are so sinful. Now a man might ask why God is so extremely opposed to sin. For in the eyes of men God's reaction to sin is excessive. But that is because of the blindness of men. God is so opposed to sin because sin is exceedingly destructive. Sin is like uncontained fire, and that always causes death and destruction. Sin always leads to death, as Paul said: **"For the wages of sin is death ... ."** (6:23). In the same way, the more life exists in a place, and the more complex the system is in a place, the more uncontained fire causes death and destruction. Would any man be so foolish as to allow uncontained fire on his property and in his house?

I will give another example. Consider our bodies. Each one is an organization of trillions of individual life-forms called cells. Cancer is when some of those cells mutate from their natural order. They begin to change their form, rebel against their designed role in the body, and live as wild creatures hostile to it. Cancer always weakens the health of the body. And it will kill the body when it is allowed to multiply and invade vital parts. Yet a man can be completely unaware of the growing cancer in his body until it is too late to save his life. Well, sin is like cancer, but it is far more insidious and destructive.

Truly, sin is evil, and God does not tolerate any of it in his heavenly world. Why then is God tolerating so much sin in this world? It is because God wanted to expose sin to show its terrible evil. For this is now the world where enemies of God (demons and men) are allowed to exist and commit sin. And it shows what kind of world results from it. For it is impossible to have a world free from corruption and death as long as sin is tolerated.

God can do anything, but not make a world free from corruption and death while tolerating sin. It is ludicrous to say otherwise. It is like saying God should allow murders, but not death. Remember, the wages of sin is death. And who can deny the horrible evils that have happened in this world where sin has become sinful to extreme. Therefore, God has made this a demonstration world so that all his creatures, in heaven and in the earth, can see what happens when sin is tolerated. I must point out, however, that God's tolerance is limited. There are times when he unleashes the fury of his wrath against sinners.

Paul said that through law sin becomes sinful to extreme. God allowed that to happen to defeat all his enemies. What God always wants (and deserves) is absolute unwavering faith in

him. That is something his enemies constantly challenge and reject. So God increased the potential for sin in order to defeat them. Substituting obedience to law to achieve righteousness in place of faith meant all of his enemies would make themselves guilty, and would therefore come under just condemnation. As God told John in his vision of heaven, **"Let the man doing wrong still do wrong, and let the filthy man still be filthy. And let the righteous man still do righteousness, and let the holy man still be holy"** (Revelation 22:11).

God wants his incorrigible enemies (those who follow the devil and refuse to repent) to be condemned, because they are destructive and deserve being condemned. However, he wants them condemned justly. Further evidence that God wants his incorrigible enemies condemned is a quotation from Jesus. He said to his disciples, **"Because of this I speak to them in parables, because seeing they see not, and hearing they hear not, nor do they understand. And in them is fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah, which says, By hearing ye will hear, and will, no, not understand, and seeing ye will see, and will, no, not perceive.**

"For this people's heart became fat, and their ears hear heavily, and their eyes are shut, lest they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and should turn, and I will heal them. But blessed are your eyes, because they see, and your ears, because they hear" (Matthew 13:13-16).

God wants his incorrigible enemies to be blind and sinful so they will be under condemnation. Therefore, those who continue to hate and oppose God will suffer eternal punishment, and justly so. And although we who love and believe in God also sin, we are not condemned because Jesus paid our debts. Thus through Christ we will be redeemed from the condemnation of our sins, and justly so.

Thus we can better understand why Paul said, **"For God has confined all men in disobedience, so that he might be merciful to all"** (11:32). He confined all men in disobedience (because of law) to defeat those who hate him, and save those who love him. And he has done it impartially, for he has offered salvation to all men. By offering all men the opportunity of salvation he has been merciful to all. But those who hate God and love sin ignore and reject that opportunity. They reject it because they have corrupted their hearts and have become blind to the truth. Therefore, they will be judged by the law in full justice.

God has given us a world of laws (moral and physical) by which to live. And the consequences of his moral and spiritual laws of righteousness are just as inexorable as are the consequences of his physical laws of nature. As Paul said, **"Be not misled, God is not mocked, for whatever a man sows this he will also reap"** (Galatians 6:7). That is just as true in the moral and spiritual realms as in the physical. And anybody who objects to how God made things and the choices he has given us, let him try to save himself by his own ways. But the fate of all the faithless who follow the devil and try to save themselves is condemnation, because every debt of sin against God *will* be paid. Unrepentant sinners in the sight of God are like irritating flies and stinging mosquitoes are to us. And who will tolerate

such creatures living freely in his house? No incorrigible enemy of God will ever live in heaven.

Let no man deceive you. God will send countless numbers of souls to burn in the eternal fires of hell because they refuse to repent. As the author of Hebrews said, **"For our God is also a consuming fire"** (Hebrews 12:29). Dear reader, be not an enemy of God, but be reconciled to him. As Paul said to his brothers in Corinth, **"And all things are from God who reconciled us to himself through Jesus Christ, and who gave to us the ministry of reconciliation. How that God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself, not imputing to them their trespasses, and having committed to us the word of reconciliation. We are therefore, ambassadors on behalf of Christ, as though God were calling through us. We plead on behalf of Christ, be ye reconciled to God"** (Second Corinthians 5:18-20).

God does not want to condemn any man; he wants all to be saved. For the book of Ezekiel says, **"Have I any pleasure in the death of a wicked man? says the lord Jehovah, and not rather that he should return from his way, and live?"** (Ezekiel 18:23). Ancient Israel was completely destroyed twice. The last time was by the Romans after the Jews rejected and crucified Christ. The first time was by the Assyrians and by the Babylonians.

The last two tribes destroyed by the Babylonians were Judah and Benjamin. Here is what the Bible says about them: **"... the people, trespassed very greatly after all the abominations of the nations. And they polluted the house of Jehovah which he had hallowed in Jerusalem. And Jehovah, the God of their fathers, sent to them by his messengers, rising up early and sending, because he had compassion on his people, and on his dwelling-place. But they mocked the messengers of God, and despised his words, and scoffed at his prophets, until the wrath of Jehovah arose against his people, till there was no remedy"** (Second Chronicles 36:14-16).

God tries every remedy to save souls from the consequences of sin. However, if his enemies remain unrepentant he will unleash his wrath against them. Therefore, be thou reconciled to God before it is eternally too late. Let Jesus Christ redeem you from condemnation by repenting and having faith in him, a living faith of obedience.

And remember, one reason that God made things so that sin would become sinful to extreme was to prove the supreme lordship of Christ. For the great difficulty of living without sin in this world has proven his moral and spiritual superiority. He lived here and endured all the temptations of Satan, yet without sin. Thus proving his worthiness for supreme lordship (except over the Father). Therefore, nobody can boast, nor can any of his enemies challenge him justifiably.

Dead to Sin, Living to God

Even though law caused sin to abound, Paul said that God's grace was more abundant: **"And the law entered so that the offense might abound. But where sin abounded, grace was more abundant, so that, as sin reigned in death, so also grace might reign, through righteousness, for eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord"** (5:20-21). Of

course, just because our sin brought the grace of God does not mean we can continue to sin. For Paul said, **"What will we say then? We continue in sin so that grace may abound? May it not happen! How will we who died to sin, still live in it? Or are ye ignorant that as many as were immersed into Christ Jesus were immersed into his death? We were buried therefore with him through the immersion into death, so that as Christ was raised up from the dead through the glory of the Father, so also we may walk in newness of life. For if we have become co-planted in the likeness of his death, then we will also be of the resurrection. Knowing this, that our old man was crucified with him, so that the body of sin might be inactivated, no longer to enslave us to sin. For he who has died has been made righteous away from sin"** (6:1-7).

After his resurrection Jesus said to his disciples, **"Having gone into all the world, preach ye the good news to the whole creation. He who believes and is immersed will be saved, but he who does not believe will be damned"** (Mark 16:15-16). Faith must be followed by immersion into water. For our immersion symbolizes the death and burial of our old sinful self. And our rising from that watery grave symbolizes our new birth into the life of Christ. As Paul said, our body of sin must be inactivated. Our symbolic burial in the watery grave of immersion makes us righteous away from sin. Therefore, we must walk in newness of life, forsaking sin and committing ourselves to a life of righteousness. Only by crucifying our old man, our former life of sin, do we have hope of being resurrected to eternal life with Christ. And immersion into water symbolizes the death and burial of our old former man.

When we make that sacrifice of our old life, dying for the sake of Christ, then we have the hope of true life. As Paul said, **"And if we died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him, knowing that Christ, having been raised from the dead, dies no more. Death no more has dominion over him. For that he died, he died to sin once, but that he lives, he lives to God. So also ye, reckon yourselves to be indeed dead to sin, but living to God in Christ Jesus our Lord"** (6:8-11). Therefore, as disciples of Christ we must reckon ourselves to be dead to sin and living to God in Christ. Being dead to sin means sin no longer has a place in our life.

Sin is like toxic pollution in our house. Having cleansed our house of it, we must keep it out. We cannot allow any part of it to have a place in us. And any man who says he is of Christ, but then lives in sin is a liar. As John said, **"He who says, I know him, and does not keep his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in this man"** (First John 2:4). And not only must we be dead to sin, but we must be living to God in Christ. That means we must actively combat evil and promote righteousness, for living is action.

Paul said we must defeat the sinful lusts of our body. And he encouraged us to use our body-parts for righteousness instead of sin: **"Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body in order to obey it, in its lusts. And do not present your body-parts as instruments of unrighteousness to sin, but present yourselves to God, as living out of the dead, and your body-parts as instruments of righteousness to God, for sin will not have dominion over you. For ye are not under law, but under grace"** (6:12-14).

We are not to allow sin to rule over our body in its lusts. Unbelievers are dominated by sin because they use their body-parts to indulge their lusts. When Paul was writing to his brothers in Ephesus, he said, **"Even you, who were dead in trespasses and sins in which ye once walked according to the era of this world, according to the ruler of the power of the air, the spirit that now works in the sons of disobedience. Among whom we also all once behaved in the lusts of our flesh, doing the intentions of the flesh and of the thoughts, and were by nature children of wrath as also the others"** (Ephesians 2:1-3). The bodies of sinners may be alive, but they are dead in spirit. And as dead spirits they are going to burn in the unquenchable fire of hell like the chaff in the parable of Jesus (see Matthew 3:12).

Notice Paul also said, **"… sin will not have dominion over you. For ye are not under law, but under grace."** When we were under law sin had dominion over us; it used the power of law to afflict and destroy us. Remember, Paul said, **"The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law"** (First Corinthians 15:56). Paul said earlier that death no more has dominion over Christ. How did death have dominion over him? While Christ Jesus was on the earth he could be killed. That is how death had dominion over him. Paul also said Christ dies no more. Hence, death no longer has power to afflict him.

That is how sin has dominion over men; it has power to afflict men. While we were under law sin had the power to kill our souls; we were under its dominion. Sin is the sting of death, but only for those who are under the laws of God, those who live by works of law instead of faith. For remember, Paul said, **"… sin is not imputed when there is no law."** That means without law sin has no power or dominion. Therefore, sin will have no dominion over the disciples of Christ, because we are not under law, but under grace. And now being alive from our former deadness in sin, we use our bodies for righteousness.

Servile to Righteousness or to Sin

Now saying we are not under law but under grace, makes it possible for some men to conclude that we can live as we please. They might claim it means there are no rules, and we can sin or not, because we are always covered by God's grace. Paul makes it clear that is false, when he said, **"What then? May we sin, because we are not under law but under grace? May it not happen! Know ye not, that to what ye present yourselves as bondmen for obedience, ye are bondmen to what ye obey, whether of sin for death, or of obedience for righteousness? But thanks to God, that ye were bondmen of sin, but ye obeyed from the heart a model of doctrine for which ye were delivered. And having been set free from sin, ye were made servile to righteousness (I speak man-like because of the weakness of your flesh). For as ye presented your body-parts servile to uncleanness, and to lawlessness for lawlessness, so now present your body-parts servile to righteousness for sanctification"** (6:15-19).

Paul said we are servile to what we obey. Men who commit sin are serving sin, and that leads to death. Any man who becomes a disciple of Christ, and then lives in sin is worse than the man who never accepts Christ. As Peter said, **"For if, having escaped the defile-**

ments of the world by knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, and, having been again entangled in these, they are overcome, the last things have become worse for them than the first. For it were better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than having known it, to turn back from the holy commandment delivered to them. But that of the true proverb has happened to them, The dog returning to his own vomit, and the sow that washed to wallowing in mire" (Second Peter 2:20-22).

We who are faithful disciples of Christ are made servile (in a sense) to righteousness, and that is for our sanctification. Hence, living for righteousness is absolutely essential for us to remain free from law and under the grace of God.

Paul continued, **"For when ye were bondmen of sin, ye were uninhibited by righteousness"** (6:20). Unbelievers are driven by their fleshly appetites, which lead them to sin. They do not restrain themselves for the sake of righteousness. Although they may restrain themselves in some ways for other reasons, such as fear of punishment or for certain loyalties. Paul then said, **"What fruit therefore did ye have then, of which things ye are now ashamed? For the end of those things is death. But now having been made free from sin, and having become servile to God, ye have your fruit for sanctification, and the end, eternal life. For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord"** (6:21-23). Believers in Christ have a different mentality from that of sinners. We believers now realize the wrongness of sin, and are ashamed of having ever committed any. Disciples of Christ have willfully abandoned their servitude to sin to become servile to God. And being under God's grace, we are promised the gift of eternal life in Christ. Unbelievers pursue and enjoy the pleasures of sin, but the consequences of that is death. For remember, Paul said the wages of sin is death.

Dead to Law

Paul then used the analogy of marriage to our relationship with Christ: **"Or are ye ignorant, brothers (for I speak to men who know the law), that the law has dominion over the man for as long a time as he lives? For the woman under authority to the living husband has been bound by law, but if the husband should die, she has been released from the law of the husband. So then, of the living husband, she will be called an adulteress if she becomes to another man, but if the husband should die, she is free from the law, for her not to be an adulteress having become to another man. Therefore, my brothers, ye also became dead to the law through the body of Christ in order for ye to become to another, to him who was raised from the dead, so that we would bear fruit to God"** (7:1-4).

Paul first said the law has lifelong dominion over a man (those under it). And he told how a wife is bound by law to her husband as long as he lives. But if he were to die, then she is free from the law, and can become to another man. Paul then shows how we must become dead to the law so that we can become to Christ and bear fruit to God. The law we become dead to is the law of works, which is the attempt to earn salvation. The law of works is not based on faith, but on obedience, such as the employee working for a wage.

Catholics and Jews practice a form of the law of works. Both claim salvation must be earned by works of law; namely, obedience to the many rules and regulations that are part of their systems. However, Paul showed how the law of works (in any form) is a failed system, which Jesus saved us from by his expiatory sacrifice.

Paul said further, **"For when we were in the flesh, the passions of the sins were working in our body-parts (through the law) in order to bear fruit to death. But now we have been released from the law, having died to what we were held, so as for us to serve in newness of spirit, and not in oldness of a document"** (7:5-6). I will repeat that passage with explanations inserted: **"For when we were in the flesh** [having a worldly mind-set]**, the passions of the sins** [evil motives and thoughts] **were working in our body-parts (through the law** [knowledge of right and wrong]**) in order to bear fruit to death** [sinful behavior]**. But now we have been released from the law** [the law of works]**, having died to what we were held, so as for us to serve in newness of spirit** [a life oriented to God]**, and not in oldness of a document** [records of statutes and ordinances in a legal system]**."**

He said next, **"What will we say then? The law is sin? May it not happen! Yet I did not know sin except through law. For likewise I would not have known lust, if the law did not say, Thou shall not covet. But sin, having taken opportunity through the commandment, wrought in me every evil desire, for apart from law sin is dead. And I was alive once apart from law, but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died. And I found to me, the commandment being for life, this is for death. For sin, having taken opportunity through the commandment, deceived me, and by it killed me. So the law is indeed holy, and the commandment is holy and righteous and good"** (7:7-12). (Let no man think Paul's only sin was to covet. He was using that as an example of sin. It was an example of lust, which is a matter of the heart and not just behavior. And sins of the heart are probably the hardest to resist.)

In that passage Paul is showing how the failure of law was not because law was sin. Righteousness by law alone fails because of sin in us. Law teaches us what is right and what is wrong (sin). Then sin deceives us into thinking sin is something good to do, which arouses the desire for sin. If people did not believe sin was good they would not willfully sin. Hence, we sin and receive the sting of death. In one sense ignorance of law (knowledge of right and wrong) protects us from temptation. However, knowledge of right and wrong is now necessary for life and development. As Paul said, the commandment (knowledge of right and wrong) was for life, meaning it promotes life. Yet it brought death because of sin, which used our knowledge to deceive us and kill us.

Paul then said, **"Has therefore what is good become death to me? May it not happen! Instead, it is sin, so that it might be revealed, sin working death in me through what is good, so that through the commandment sin might become sinful to extreme"** (7:13). Remember, sin uses law to cause death, but that does not mean law is bad. The law of gravity may cause someone to be hurt, but that does not mean gravity is bad. Law is not the problem. Indeed, it is **"holy and righteous and good."** In another letter he said, **"But we know that the law is good, if any man uses it lawfully"** (First Timothy 1:8). What is bad

is not using it lawfully, such as in a perverted way, which is so common during these sinful times when vicious criminals are freed on a technicality of the law.

Our Struggle with Contrasting Laws

Next Paul spoke about his struggle with the law of sin. He first said, **"For we know that the law is spiritual, but I am carnal, having been sold under sin"** (7:14). What Paul probably means by the law being spiritual is that it is an ideal. The law of God describes the way we ought to behave. Paul contrasted that ideal with the fact he was carnal, a mere man who could not avoid making errors. He could not avoid it because he was **"sold under sin."** He had been sold under sin because, like all men, he had willfully sinned.

Our eternal spirit is born pure and innocent. It is only when we willfully sin that our soul becomes guilty before God, and we are condemned to eternal death. As the prophet Ezekiel said, **"The soul that sins, it shall die. The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, nor shall the father bear the iniquity of the son"** (Ezekiel 18:20). The teaching of "original sin" that says we are all born sinful and guilty only applies to our body of flesh, not to our eternal spirit. Remember what Paul said about Adam: **"… just as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin, so also death passed to all men, in that all sinned** (5:12). Notice he said, **"… death passed to all men, in that all sinned."** Our souls are condemned like Adam when we first sin and not before. And that sin is what causes us to be sold under sin.

And having been sold under sin we are **"captive in the law of sin**" (7:23), which means as long as we are in the flesh we can never completely overcome it. Therefore Paul lamented, **"For I do not understand what I do, for I do not do this that I want, but what I hate, this I do. But if I do this that I do not want, I agree with the law that it is good. But now I no longer perform it, but the sin dwelling in me. For I know that good does not dwell in me, that is, in my flesh, for to will is present in me, but to do the good, I find not. For I do not do good that I want, instead, wrong that I do not want, this I do. But if I do this that I do not want, I no longer perform it, but sin dwelling in me. Consequently I find the law in my wanting to do good, that evil is present in me. For I delight in the law of God according to the inner man, but I see a different law in my body-parts, warring against the law of my mind, and taking me captive in the law of sin, which is in my body-parts"** (7:15-23).

When Paul said **"what I hate this I do,"** but **"I no longer perform it,"** he was referring to himself in two senses: his flesh and his spirit. In his spirit Paul wanted to live a perfect life. He wanted to live the ideal, but his flesh would not allow him because it was sold under sin. Notice Paul said, **"I do not understand what I do."** Have we not all done something foolish unwittingly, and then said to ourselves, "Why did I do that?" It is because our body has been sold under sin. No genuine disciple of Christ wants to sin, yet we all do from time to time. I do not want to injure my body, but I do from time to time. I do not want to hurt my wife, or any innocent soul, but I do from time to time. Like Paul I do not want to do any of

those things, but I do. It is not me willfully choosing to do wrong things, it is my wretched body that causes me. As Paul said, **"I no longer perform it, but sin dwelling in me."**

Paul grieved about his failure to live without doing anything wrong, and he said, **"I am a wretched man. Who will rescue me out of the body of this death? I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then, I of myself in the mind indeed serve a law of God, but in the flesh a law of sin"** (7:24-25). Consciously Paul served a law of God, but unconsciously because his body was sold under sin he served a law of sin. Remember, Jesus never sold himself under sin. He lived the ideal, therefore he became our Redeemer and Savior.

Now let no man misunderstand. The kinds of sins that violate the ten commandments and other such commandments of God are not what Paul meant. For in other places he soundly condemned them. For example, he told his brothers at Corinth, **"But now I write to you not to associate if any man who is called a brother is a fornicator, or a greedy man, or an idolater, or a slanderer, or a drunkard, or a predator, not even to eat with such kind"** (First Corinthians 5:11). When Paul said he served a law of sin in his flesh he was referring to the errors and imperfections of the behavior that righteous men strive to avoid. Sinners who excuse murderers, rapists, drunken killers and other serious offenders as having acted while mentally diseased or in some other so called "involuntary way" are liars. And they themselves should be condemned with the guilty souls they try to defend.

Paul went on to say, **"Consequently nothing is condemnation now to those in Christ Jesus, who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit"** (8:1). Notice he said nothing is condemnation to those in Christ **"who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit."** In other words, we disciples of Christ live according to the values of the Spirit of God, and not by the lusts and impulses of our flesh. And in so doing we are not condemned for the minor errors and imperfections of our behavior. Our flesh will still suffer (and sometimes cause others to suffer) because of them, but we are not condemned as sinners. As God's children, he will chasten us for our infractions, but he will not condemn us as sinners. Isaiah wrote of that, when he said, **"No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper. And every tongue that shall rise against thee in judgment thou shall condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of Jehovah, and their righteousness which is of me, says Jehovah"** (Isaiah 54:17).

Paul continued, saying, **"For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus freed me from the law of sin and of death"** (8:2). Our bodies are bound to the law of sin as long as we live in the flesh. However, our eternal spirit has been freed from the law of sin by the expiatory sacrifice of Jesus. Remember what Paul said: **"And having been set free from sin, ye were made servile to righteousness"** (6:18). Christ set our eternal spirit free from the law of sin, and we now live a life for God in obedience to him. Like Paul, we can say, **"... I of myself in the mind indeed serve a law of God."**

Jesus Condemned Sin

Paul then said, **"For the impotence of the law, in that it was weak because of the flesh, God, having sent his own Son in a form of flesh of sin, and concerning sin, condemned**

sin in the flesh, so that the justice of the law might be fulfilled in us, those who walk not according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit" (8:3-4). As he said earlier, the law was holy, righteous, and good. However, it was impotent to assure our righteousness because the power of our flesh to tempt us to sin is stronger. Therefore, God sent his own Son in a form of flesh to condemn sin while he was in the flesh. Notice, Paul used the phrase **"flesh of sin."** When Adam sinned he brought sin into the world, and that corrupted the human body into a flesh of sin. Remember, there are different kinds of sin. Our body sins when its lusts tempt us to offend God. However, there is no sin for our spirit in *being* tempted. It is only when we willfully submit to our sinful lusts that our souls become guilty.

Paul said that when God sent his Son into the world he condemn sin in the flesh, but how did he condemn it? When Jesus lived a sinless life as a man in this world, that condemned sin. He proved that sin was avoidable, and therefore God's law is just to condemn those who sin. Sin is committing an offense against God. And before Christ came it could have been argued that because men are flesh and not God we cannot keep from offending him. If that were the case, it would not be just for him to condemn our every sin.

The enemies of God continually attempt to justify themselves when they violate his commands. The book of Job tells how Satan was arguing with God that everybody is selfish and it is natural to sin. God proved that Job would not curse him for his unjust suffering, as Satan said he would. However, Job was not fully perfect, and God afterward criticized some of the things he said during the time of his agony.

To prove that it was possible to live a sinless life God sent his own Son into the world, and that condemned sin once and for all. It was by the sinless life of Christ that God proved sin could be avoided even in the flesh, and he was therefore fully justified to condemn sin. God also proved that his Son was alone worthy to reign supreme over all others, except of course, for himself. And in time to come everybody will confess that (see Revelation 5:11-13).

Paul also said that when God sent his own Son he **"condemned sin in the flesh, so that the justice of the law might be fulfilled in us, those who walk not according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit."** Through Christ, God proved a man could live a sinless life, which condemned sin as not being inevitable and consequently excusable. When Jesus suffered in perfect innocence to obey God's will, the justice of the law (God's law of righteousness) required Jesus be recompensed by God. If God had not given Jesus any recompense that would have been unjust. The recompense God gave his Son was the souls of all his disciples free of debt. Jesus purchased us with his blood and atoned for our sins. See Part 4:1 for more about that.

Flesh Versus Spirit

Next Paul said, **"For those who are according to the flesh think about the things of the flesh, but those according to the Spirit the things of the Spirit. For the mentality of the flesh is death, but the mentality of the Spirit is life and peace. Because the mentality of the flesh is enmity against God, for it is not submissive to the law of God, for neither**

is it able. And those who are in flesh cannot please God" (8:5-8). Those who live according to the flesh are those who live a worldly life, of whatever kind it may be. Their minds are set upon worldly values and goals, and they live by them. Those who live according to the Spirit of God have forsaken the worldly life. Their minds are set upon the high values and goals of God, and they live by them. And those two ways of life are opposite and mutually hostile. Paul said the mentality of the flesh cannot please God, for it is enmity against God and is not submissive to his law (the laws of righteousness). It is, therefore, the way of death. In contrast, those who live according to the Spirit live by the things of the Spirit, which is life and peace. For God is the author of life and peace.

Paul continued to speak about living by the Spirit of God: **"But ye are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. But if any man does not have the Spirit of Christ, this man is not of him. And if Christ is in you, the body is indeed dead because of sin, but the spirit is life because of righteousness"** (8:9-10). Notice Paul said a man was not of Christ if he did not have the Spirit of Christ. A spirit is an energizing force. And if the life of a man is not energized by the kind of spirit Christ has, then he does not belong to him. However, if we are motivated by the Spirit of Christ, then although our body is condemned to perish because of sin, our spirit is alive because of righteousness—Christ's righteousness and our righteousness. Our righteousness confirms that the Spirit of God dwells in us.

He said further, **"But if the Spirit of him who raised up Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised up the Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit that dwells in you. So then, brothers, we are debtors, not to the flesh to live according to flesh. For if ye live according to flesh, ye are going to die, but if in spirit ye kill the deeds of the body, ye will live. For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God"** (8:11-14). Here Paul mentions God's promise of eternal life for those who kill the deeds of the body and live according to the Spirit of Christ. He said God would give us life (eternal life) **"if in spirit ye kill the deeds of the body."** Notice he said "if." Eternal life for us is contingent upon using our own spirit, by our own free will, to kill the deeds of the body. Those deeds are the ones produced by the sinful lusts and impulses of our flesh. And although we cannot eliminate those evil feelings, we can combat them and the sinful behavior they provoke.

Then he said, **"For ye did not receive a spirit of bondage again for fear, but ye received a spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. The Spirit itself testifies with our spirit, that we are children of God. And if children, also heirs, heirs indeed of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if indeed we suffer jointly, so that we may also be glorified jointly"** (8:15-17). We are adopted children of God through Christ. Hence, we are joint-heirs with him to be glorified jointly. Notice, however, he said it would be **"if indeed we suffer jointly."** Again, our promise of glorification is contingent upon our willingness to suffer to obey God, as Christ did. And part of our suffering is our struggle to keep our flesh dead to sin.

The Salvation of Jews and Gentiles

Next Paul said, **"What will we say then? That the Gentiles who did not pursue righteousness, attained righteousness, even the righteousness from faith. But Israel who pursued a law of righteousness, did not arrive to a law of righteousness. Why? Because it was not from faith but as from works of law. For they stumbled at the stone of stumbling, just as it is written, Behold, I lay in Zion a stone of stumbling and a rock of offense. And every man who believes in him will not be shamed"** (9:30-33). What Paul quoted was a passage from Isaiah (8:14). It was Isaiah's prophesy that the teachings of Jesus would offend the Israelites, and their lack of faith in him would cause them to stumble. They were too proud and committed to their legalism to accept the good news of Christ, which was the new way of righteousness.

The Israelites pursued righteousness, but in the wrong way. First, they did not keep the laws of Moses. For Jesus said to the Jews, **"Did not Moses give you the law, and none of you does the law?"** (John 7:19). They kept some of it but not all of it. And as James said, **"For whoever keeps the whole law, and stumbles on one, he has become guilty of all"** (James 2:10). Second, they added many of their own laws, which led them further from the new way of righteousness. As Paul said about them, **"For I testify to them that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge. For not understanding the righteousness of God, and seeking to establish their own righteousness, they did not submit to the righteousness of God. For Christ is the end of law for righteousness, to every man who believes"** (10:2-4). Therefore, most of them stumbled by rejecting the attainable righteousness of faith, and they pursued the unattainable righteousness by law.

In contrast to Israel the Gentiles had no regard for God's righteousness. They lived by worldly values and standards of behavior. As Paul wrote in the Galatian letter, **"We are Jews by nature and not sinful men of the Gentiles"** (Galatians 2:15). Nevertheless, some Gentiles did attain righteousness because they accepted faith in Christ. The righteousness they attained was not based on law but upon faith in God. They were able to attain the righteousness of God because it does not require perfect obedience to a legal system. As Paul said, **"Christ is the end of law for righteousness, to every man who believes.** (10:4).

He went on to say, **"For Moses writes in the righteousness from the law, that the man that does them will live in them. But the righteousness from faith says thus: Thou should not say in thy heart, Who will ascend into heaven? (that is, to bring Christ down) or, Who will descend into the abyss? (That is, to bring Christ up from the dead). But what does it say? The word is near thee, in thy mouth and in thy heart, that is, the word of faith that we preach: that if thou will confess with thy mouth, Lord Jesus, and will believe in thy heart that God raised him from the dead, thou will be saved"** (10:5-9).

The righteousness from law requires obedience to statutes and ordinances, all of them. While the righteousness from faith requires trust in God without having to know the deepest mysteries. Paul gave the example of the mysteries of heaven and of the abyss. Modern un-

believers demand the answer to such mysteries as, "If God made the world, who made God?", and "How could God make the world in only six days?" The righteousness from faith believes and trusts God without having to understand everything. And we have Abraham as an example of such faith. For he was even ready to kill and burn as a sacrifice his long awaited son in obedience to God.

Some have used the above passage as evidence to support their claim that salvation is a result of faith only. They conveniently ignore the part that mentions confession. They also ignore other passages that show the faith Paul meant was not mere belief. For example, James said, **"But do thou want to know, O vain man, that faith apart from works is dead? Was not Abraham our father made righteous from works, having offered up Isaac his son upon the altar? Thou see that faith was working with his works, and from the works, faith was fully perfected. And the scripture was fulfilled, which says, And Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to him for righteousness, and he was called a friend of God. Ye see therefore that from works a man is made righteous, and not from faith only. And likewise also was not Rahab the harlot made righteous from works, having received the agents, and having sent them out another way? For as the body without a spirit is dead, so also faith without the works is dead"** (James 2:20-26).

Although the Jews as a whole rejected Christ when he came to them (and they still do) Paul did say that the time was coming when they would accept him: **"For I do not want you, brothers, to be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise according to yourselves, that a callousness in part has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles come in. And so all Israel will be saved, as it is written, The man who delivers will come from Zion, and will turn away impiety from Jacob. And this is the covenant from me to them when I will take away their sins. They are indeed enemies toward the good news for your sake, but toward selection, they are beloved for the fathers' sake. For the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable.**

"For as ye once were also disobedient to God, but now have received mercy at the disobedience of these, so also now these have been disobedient for thy mercy, so that they also may receive mercy. For God has confined all men in disobedience, so that he might be merciful to all. O the depth of wealth, both of the wisdom and the knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways beyond finding out! For who has known the mind of the Lord? Or who became his counselor? Or who first gave to him, and it will be repaid to him? Because from him, and through him, and for him, are all things. To him is the glory into the ages. Truly" (11:25-36).

The Hebrews were God's chosen people for about two thousand years. It has been now almost two thousand years since they rejected Christ and have been forsaken by God. Perhaps when those two time periods become equal that will be when **"all Israel will be saved,"** as Paul prophesied. And that will indeed be a glorious time, perhaps ushering in a great age of righteousness. Paul seems to have implied that when he said of them, **"For if the casting away of them is reconciliation of the world, what is the acceptance except life from the dead?"** (11:15). The Jews were cast away because they rejected their Messiah, the Son of

God. Yet Paul said the time is coming when they will believe in Jesus Christ, and will become accepted by God again.

Offices of Authority

Paul commanded the disciples of Christ to be subject to offices of authority, when he said, **"Let every soul be subject to offices of authority that rank higher, for there is no office of authority if not by God, and the offices of authority that are by God, are those that have been instituted. So that he who resists the office of authority has opposed the ordinance of God, and those who have opposed will receive condemnation to themselves"** (13:1-2). Christians are, therefore, obligated to be law-abiding citizens. And those who are not, sin against God and will be condemned by him.

Notice, however, that Paul added the comment, **"**... **there is no office of authority if not by God ... ."** What he is saying is that an office of authority is legitimate only if it promotes the laws of God's righteousness. To the extent that an officeholder promotes the laws of righteousness, to that extent he is legitimate. If the office of authority does not support the laws of God's righteousness, then it is illegitimate. To the extent the officeholder opposes the laws of righteousness, to that extent he is illegitimate. Therefore, the command to be subject to offices of authority does not apply universally. There are many examples in the New Testament when the apostles resisted the commands of a high office of authority. Jesus himself even opposed them at times.

Other versions mistranslate the words Paul wrote in that passage, and have him say there is no authority but (or except) from God. That has been used to justify the so called "divine right of kings," which is the idea that government authorities are established by God, and it is sinful to ever oppose them. That idea was popular for a time in medieval Europe. However, Paul's command, correctly translated, makes it clear that offices of authority can be resisted when they oppose the laws of God's righteousness.

Love Fulfills Law

Further on in the book of Romans Paul summarized the requirements of the law by saying, **"Owe no man anything except to love each other, for he who loves the other has fulfilled law. For this, Thou shall not commit adultery, Thou shall not murder, Thou shall not steal, Thou shall not testify falsely, Thou shall not covet, and if there be any other commandment it is summarized in this saying, in, Thou shall love thy neighbor as thyself. Love works no evil to the neighbor. Therefore love is the fulfillment of law"** (13:8-10).

Part 3:7

LAW IN FIRST CORINTHIANS

LEGAL DISPUTES

The first thing Paul said about law in this book was, **"Dare any of you, having a matter against the other, go to law before the unrighteous and not before the sanctified? Or know ye not that the sanctified will judge the world? And if the world is judged by you, are ye unworthy of very small legal disputes? Know ye not that we will judge agents? Then why not mundane things? Indeed therefore whenever ye have mundane legal disputes, men who are disdained by the church, these ye seat to judge. I speak shame about you. So there is not among you not even one wise man who will be able to arbitrate between his brother? But brother goes to law against brother, and this before unbelievers? Now therefore it is indeed altogether a defeat for you because ye have legal disputes against yourselves. Why not rather be wronged? Why not rather be defrauded? Instead ye do wrong, and defraud, and these things to brothers. Or know ye not that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God?"** (6:1-9).

In that passage Paul was referring to the way they were resolving their disputes. Instead of making judgments within themselves they were taking their disputes to the law courts of the secular world. He rebuked them for preferring the judgment of sinners instead of their fellow Christians. Law courts are needed for sinners but not for Christians. When a Christian is involved with legal disputes or infractions that involve unbelievers he is forced to use the law courts. Otherwise Christians should stay away from them and settle matters among themselves where justice is more likely to be upheld. That assumes, of course, that the judges used are wise and faithful Christians. It is a sign of grave spiritual weakness when pagan law courts are more just in arbitrating disputes, than are Christians.

ALL THINGS ARE LAWFUL

After that Paul said, **"All things are lawful for me, but not all things are expedient. All things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under control by anything"** (6:12). That is another passage showing how disciples of Christ are not under a legal system with God. He said all things were lawful for him, meaning God had imposed no legal restrictions to his behavior. And there is no doubt Paul was referring to all Christians. (Of course, as long as we are in this world we are subject to the legal restrictions imposed by men.) Now although all things are lawful for us, Paul also said not all things were expedient; not all things are useful or helpful or constructive. Therefore, all who are guided by the Spirit of Christ within them will use their freedom from legal restraints to be productive and fruitful for righteousness, not to commit sin.

In his second letter to the Corinthian brothers Paul said, **"… where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty"** (Second Corinthians 3:17). Liberty or freedom can be used creatively for righteousness or for wickedness. If a man has the Spirit of the Lord in him he will use his liberty to be productive and creative for righteousness. And the more liberty he has the

more creative and productive he can be. Legal restrictions (which include things such as bureaucratic rules and paperwork) always impede progress. They are necessary in the absence of the Spirit of Christ, because then the hearts of men are inclined to selfishness and crookedness. As Solomon said, **"For the transgression of a land many are the rulers of it"** (Proverbs 28:2). Transgressors need many laws and regulations and rulers (such as bureaucrats) because their hearts are inclined to selfishness and crookedness. On the other hand, men who have the Spirit of Christ in them are inclined to altruism and love for others, which makes them productive for righteous things. They want to be productive and helpful, and the fewer restrictions they have the more creative for good they can be.

Paul also said, **"All things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under control by anything."** Paul submitted himself to the authority of Christ, and with the Spirit of Christ in him he had liberty. Having that Spirit he would not give up his liberty to be controlled by anything. He said in his Roman letter, **"Know ye not, that to what ye present yourselves as bondmen for obedience, ye are bondmen to what ye obey, whether of sin for death, or of obedience for righteousness?"** (Romans 6:16). Men come under the control of many different sinful things. Therefore, we should never surrender ourselves to anything except Jesus Christ and his righteousness.

Some Laws for Us

Although we are under a covenant of faith and all things are lawful for us, nevertheless, we are still committed to the righteousness of God, including laws of righteousness. Remember, Paul said faith establishes law (See Romans 3:31). We should obey laws that promote the righteousness of God as taught by the good news of Christ. And Paul is here giving some examples of those laws.

He first speaks about marriage. He said, **"A wife is bound by law as long a time as her husband lives, but also if the husband should sleep** [in death]**, she is free to be married to whom she desires, only in the Lord"** (7:39). The law of Moses allowed a man to divorce his wife, but there was no provision for a woman to divorce her husband. She was bound to him as long as he lived. Indeed, even now an Israeli wife cannot divorce her husband without his permission. When Jesus was asked about divorce he said that God never wanted it. He only tolerated it for men of the law of Moses because of the hardness of their hearts. Jesus said the only grounds for a man to divorce his wife was fornication. Paul did said a Christian woman could separate from her husband. However, she could not divorce him and remarry, unless he was an unbeliever who left her.

The next thing Paul said about the law concerns recompense for labor. He was teaching them that those who work for the Lord ought to be paid. And he said, **"Do I say these things according to man, or does not the law also say these things? For it is written in the law of Moses thou shall not muzzle an ox threshing grain. Is God concerned about oxen, or does he speak altogether for our sake? For our sake, for it was written, He who plows ought to plow with hope, and he who threshes with his hope, with hope to share. If we sowed spiritual things to you, is it a great thing if we will reap your carnal**

things?" (9:8-11). However, Paul said he did not use that right for himself so that he could **"make the good news of the Christ without charge."** Paul was unmarried and had no other obligations. It was his personal choice to make himself a eunuch for the sake of the kingdom (see Matthew 19:12).

Some Other Words About Law

After those things Paul said, **"For although being free from all men, I made myself a servant to all, so that I might gain the more. And to the Jews I became as a Jew, so that I might gain Jews, to those under law, as under law, so that I might gain those under law, to those without law, as without law (not being without law to God, but within law to Christ), so that I might gain men without law. To the weak I became as weak, so that I might gain the weak. I have become all things to all men, so that by all means I might save some. And I do this for sake of the good news, so that I might become a fellow participant of it"** (9:19-23).

Paul was saying he conformed himself to whatever kind of society he was with so that he could save some of them. He even said he became as without law, meaning with those who had no legal system. Nevertheless, he remained within law to Christ. Remember, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob lived as nomads not subject to any legal system. And there were no doubt some Gentile men during the time of Paul (especially in more remote rural areas) who were like that. As a disciple of Christ, Paul had the liberty to live with or without law conforming to whatever society he was with. However, as with every disciple of Christ, he remained within law to Christ, the law that James called **"the perfect law, the one of liberty"** (James 1:25).

The following passage is another example of when the law meant the entire Old Testament: **"In the law it is written, In other tongues and in other lips I will speak to this people, and not even so will they hear me, says the Lord"** (14:21). Paul quoted that passage from Isaiah (28:11), not the law of Moses, and it prophesied the refusal of Jews to accept Christ.

His next mention of the law refers again to women. He said, **"As in all the churches of the sanctified, let the women keep silent in the churches. For it is not permitted for them to speak, but to be subordinate, as the law also says"** (14:34). There are several places in the law of Moses commanding the subordination of women to their husbands. For example, the law allowed a husband to cancel a vow made by his wife, when he first heard it, but a wife could not do that with her husband. Women being outspoken in a church assembly is a violation of their commanded subordination.

Here is the last thing Paul said about the law in this book: **"The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law"** (15:56). As with Adam any violation of a law of God brings condemnation and the penalty of death. That is why every man must die. There are only two documented cases of men who were spared the death of their bodies even though they were not sinless (see Genesis 5:24 and Second Kings 2:1). They were Enoch and Elijah, and they were both very righteous men. The Bible says about Enoch, **"By faith Enoch was transferred to not see death, and he was not found, because God transferred him. For be-**

fore his removal he was reported to be pleasing to God" (Hebrews 11:5). And it says about Elijah, **"And it came to pass, as they still went on, and talked, that, behold, *there appeared* a chariot of fire, and horses of fire, which divided them both apart. And Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven. And Elisha saw it, and he cried, My father, my father, the chariots of Israel and the horsemen of it!"** (Second Kings 2:11-12).

What happened to the bodies of Enoch and Elijah is a great mystery, as well as why they were exceptions to the rule of death. However, God can make any exceptions he wants, and he is not obligated to explain his reasons why. Nevertheless, you can be certain of this about God: he is always right and just in whatever he does, whether we understand or not. God may have made those two exceptions to the death of our flesh—one man who was not under the law of Moses and one man who was under it—to tell us he can do whatever he wants, even as far as sparing a man the death of his body. Remember, however, those men would still have aged and died if they had remained on the earth. Although God could even have prevented that if he so desired.

God told Adam that if he disobeyed him he would die. When Adam disobeyed he was condemned to eventually die, and all it took was a single violation. And that is true of every man who ever disobeys God: a single violation condemns us to death. As with Adam, when a man sins he receives the sting of death. And when men are under laws and commandments, sin has that power. However, the souls of the disciples of Christ, who are not under law to God, are immune from the sting of death. For without law there can be no violations. We cannot break laws that do not apply to us. Therefore, although our body is condemned to die, as a disciple of Christ our spirit is saved from the eternal death of hell by being a child of God. For the children of God are not under a system of law with him. As Paul said to his Galatian brothers, **"But if ye are led by the Spirit ye are not under law"** (Galatians 5:18).

Part 3:8

LAW IN GALATIANS

NO LAW OF MOSES

Paul wrote much about the law in this book because some Jews were attempting to persuade the Christians in Galatia to obey the laws of Moses. Adding the law of Moses to the new covenant of Christ was a perversion of that covenant, and Paul wrote this letter to combat the threat. Paul was very troubled because they were being led astray that way. He even uttered a curse against all who attempt to pervert the good news of Christ. He said, **"But even if we, or an agent from heaven, should preach a good news to you contrary to what we preached to you, let him be accursed. As we have said before, I now also say again, if any man preaches a good news to you contrary to what ye received, let him be accursed"** (1:8-9). He then said, **"For do I now trust men or God? Or do I seek to please men? For if I were still pleasing men I would not be a bondman of Christ"** (1:10). The desire to please men has been perhaps the major cause of perverting the teachings of Christ.

After that he told about his conversion to Christ, and a meeting he had later with the church leaders in Jerusalem. About that meeting he said, **"But not even Titus with me, being a Greek, was compelled to be circumcised. But that issue was because of those false brothers smuggled in, who sneaked in to spy out our liberty that we have in Christ Jesus, so that they might enslave us, to whom we yielded in subjection not even for an hour, so that the truth of the good news might continue with you"** (2:3-5). Notice how Paul contrasted the liberty we have as Christians with being enslaved to the law of Moses. The law of Moses was not a bad law; it was a very good law. However, it was a legal system, and all legal systems create a form of bondage. Biblical evidence indicates God never intended to burden his people with the legal system of Moses that he finally gave them. They were given that system because they were so rebellious toward him. And rebels against righteousness need bondage. However, the disciples of Christ, as God's new chosen people, they love, trust, and obey him. Therefore, they need no legal system. All they need is truth and knowledge to guide them. They do not need the walls and chains of legalism to restrain them.

A little farther in the book he said, **"We are Jews by nature and not sinful men of the Gentiles, knowing that a man is not made righteous from works of law, instead through faith of Jesus Christ. And we believed in Christ Jesus, so that we might be made righteous from faith of Christ, and not from works of law, because no flesh will be made righteous from works of law"** (2:15-16). The Jews that Paul referred to were converts, disciples of Christ, because they knew that works of law did not make a man righteous. Jews were the survivors of the Hebrew race that God chose to preserve righteousness. As God's chosen people the Hebrews were to contrast with the sinfulness of the rest of the world. That was God's desire, but they often failed to live as he planned for them.

God has always wanted absolute faith and trust in him, and he always will. He expects it because he alone is worthy of it. He alone can be trusted absolutely, because he will never fail. Faith promotes obedience to commandments. Absence of faith promotes challenges to obedience, direct or indirect (such as finding loopholes). And challenges promote various kinds of disobedience. Therefore, in contrast to faith, works of law do not make a man righteous before God. A man may be righteous in some ways without faith, but not in the complete way that God demands, which only faith can do.

No Sinning

Next Paul said, **"But if, while seeking to be made righteous in Christ, we ourselves were also found sinful, then is Christ an aide of sin? May it not happen! For if I build again these things that I tore down, I demonstrate myself a transgressor"** (2:18). We cannot choose faith over law and then live sinfully. If we return to sinful living (build again what we tore down) that shows we are transgressors, and God rejects transgressors. For even after adopting us he will disown us if we continue in sin. In the book of Revelation John tells how God spoke of the glories of heaven, after which God said, **"He who overcomes will inherit these things, and I will be God to him, and he will be a son to me. But for the cowards, and unbelieving, and sinful, and abominable, and murderers, and fornicators, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, their part is in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death"** (Revelation 21:7-:8). He did not say a man had to commit *all* of those sins to be cast into hell, but *any* of those sins (or any sin like them). A man could be a believer, but if he remained a coward he would be cast into the lake of fire. And that is true of anybody who continues in sin.

Paul then said, **"For I, through law, died to law, so that I might live to God"** (2:19). Paul died to law as the way to become righteous before God, and he died to the law of sin. But what was the law through which Paul died to law? It was the law of the Spirit of life in Christ, as Paul said in Romans, **"For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus freed me from the law of sin and of death"** (Romans 8:2). We have all been under the law of sin, which is also a law of death because sin brings eternal condemnation. But through Christ our eternal spirits have become freed from the law of sin and of death.

After that Paul said, **"I have been crucified with Christ, and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. And what I now live in flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God who loved me and gave himself up for me"** (2:20). What he meant by being crucified was the death of his old man of sin. Remember, he said in Romans, **"Knowing this, that our old man was crucified with him, so that the body of sin might be inactivated, no longer to enslave us to sin. For he who has died has been made righteous away from sin. And if we died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him …"** (Romans 6:6-8). And he also said, **"But ye are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. But if any man does not have the Spirit of Christ, this man is not of him. And if Christ is in you, the body is indeed dead because of sin, but the spirit is life because of righteousness"** (Romans 8:9-10).

Next Paul said, **"I do not disregard the grace of God, for if righteousness is through law, then Christ died in vain"** (2:20-21). Remember how John contrasted the grace of God with the law of Moses: **"… from his fullness we all received, even grace for grace. Because the law was given through Moses. Grace and truth came to be through Jesus Christ"** (John 1:17). Christ died so he could redeem us from condemnation. And that redemption is a gift of his grace. If our righteousness is through obedience to law not grace, then Christ died in vain. But he did not die in vain because righteousness is not through obedience to law.

BEWITCHED

Then Paul said, **"O foolish Galatians, who bewitched you not to obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ was earlier described among you, crucified?"** (3:1). As can be seen in his letters, Paul had a deep love for Christ, and he had a great love for his fellow Christians. He remained unmarried throughout his life, so he had no wife and children. Some of his blood kin were converted, because in the last part of his letter to the Romans Paul sends greeting to many persons, some of whom he says were his kinsmen. However, Paul's heart was with Christ, and with his spiritual brothers and sisters. That is why he was so exasperated with his brothers at Galatia by their wandering from the truth of Christ. Paul had told them the story of how and why Jesus was crucified. It was not that they were ignorant of the truth; they had been bewitched to forsake it. False teachers are often highly skilled in methods of persuasion, which can charm many into going astray. Paul wanted to know who had done that with them.

He then asked them a series of questions: **"I only want to learn this from you. Did ye receive the Spirit from works of law, or from a listening ear of faith? Are ye so foolish, having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh? Did ye suffer so many things in vain? If it is indeed in vain. He therefore who supplies the Spirit to you and who works miracles among you, is it from works of law or from a listening ear of faith?"** (3:2-5). He asked them how they had received the Spirit of God and the miracles he worked among them. It was not from works of law, but from a listening ear of faith. They received the Spirit of God and the miracles, not because of their obedience to a legal system, but because they believed the truth and accepted it. They began with the divine Spirit of God. How could they then think they would be made perfect by things of the flesh? Farther on in this book Paul contrasted the desires of the Spirit with the desires of the flesh, which he said were hostile to each other. He also asked them if they suffered so many things in vain. Apparently, the Galatian Christians had already experienced much persecution because of their faith.

Then he spoke of Abraham: **"Just as Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to him for righteousness. Ye know therefore that those from faith, these are sons of Abraham. And the scripture having foreseen that God makes the Gentiles righteous from faith, proclaimed the good news in advance to Abraham: In thee all the nations will be blessed. So then those from faith are blessed with the faithful Abraham"** (3:6-9). Abraham was the father of the Hebrew race. The Jews boasted about being descen-

dents of Abraham, but Paul said the true sons of Abraham are **"those from faith,"** meaning those who have faith in God of whatever race. Paul even quoted a passage from the book of Genesis (22:18) where God told Abraham his blessing would include all the nations. And that blessing was through faith.

The Curse of the Law

Paul then warned them about the consequences of relying upon the law for salvation. He said, **"For as many as are from works of law are under a curse, for it is written, Cursed is every man who does not continue in all things written in the book of the law, to do them"** (3:10). All who rely upon law for salvation are under a curse because no man has the strength of character to obey every law every time. The curse Paul quoted was given by Moses. Moses commanded the sons of Israel to make that curse after they crossed the Jordan into their promised land.

Half the tribes were to stand upon one mountain to utter a blessing, and half were to stand upon another mountain to utter a curse. There were twelve curses, the last of which said, **"Cursed is every man who does not continue in all the words of this law to do them"** (Deuteronomy 27:26). All the people were to say "truly" after each curse. That passage says a man is cursed if he did not do all the words in the law. Therefore, a single infraction brought a man under that curse. And since no man was able to keep every law every time then every man under the law was cursed. No doubt God commanded that curse for that very reason. Remember what Paul said: **"For God has confined all men in disobedience, so that he might be merciful to all"** (Romans 11:32).

Paul then told how faith in Christ saves us from the curse of the law. He said, **"But that no man is made righteous by law before God, is evident, because, The righteous man will live from faith. And the law is not from faith, but the man who does them will live in them. Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us. For it is written, Cursed is every man who hangs on a tree. So that the blessing of Abraham might occur for the Gentiles in Christ Jesus, so that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through the faith"** (3:11-14).

The Gentiles were not under the law of Moses, but every man has been under the common law of God that is inborn in our hearts. And the same curse that God told about the law of Moses, applies to violations of that common law in our hearts. Therefore, Christ redeemed every man of faith from the curse of the law, whether it be the law of Moses or some other source of the laws of God's righteousness. Jesus became a curse because he was hanged on a cross, for Moses said a hanged man was accursed of God. (Only Jesus' corpse on the cross was accursed.) All the unjust suffering experienced by Jesus, including the curse upon a tree, earned him the right to redeem all who have faith in him.

After that Paul said, **"Brothers (I speak according to a man), in the same way of a man, no man annuls or adds to a contract that has been ratified. Now the promises were spoken to Abraham and to his seed. He does not say, And to the seeds, as of many, but as of one, And to thy seed, who is Christ. And I say this, a covenant previously con-**

firmed by God in Christ, the law, which happened four hundred and thirty years after, does not annul in order to make the promise useless. For if the inheritance is from law, it is no longer from promise. But God has given it to Abraham through promise" (3:15-18).

God made many promises to Abraham. Here is the one he made after testing him about Isaac: **"By myself I have sworn, says Jehovah, because thou have done this thing, and have not withheld thy son, thine only son, that in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heavens, and as the sand which is upon the seashore, and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies, and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed, because thou have obeyed my voice"** (Genesis 22:16-18). The Hebrew word for seed is that passage is singular. Paul used that fact to indicate the promise to Abraham was through Christ (the one seed), and it is through him that all the nations are blessed.

The part about multiplying his seed has come to pass in two ways: (1) physically through the people of Israel who are his biological descendents, and (2) spiritually through the disciples of Christ who are the descendents of his faith. As Paul said in Romans, **"… for the promise to be sure to all the seed, not only to the seed from the law, but also to the seed from the faith of Abraham, who is father of us all (as it is written, I have made thee a father of many nations) …"** (Romans 4:16-17). Paul said the promise to Abraham was not annulled by the law which came much later. And he said the inheritance could not be from the law and the promise both. Salvation by the law, and salvation by faith in Christ are mutually incompatible. Therefore, we cannot accept faith in Christ and still follow the legal system of Moses. As Paul said earlier, **"Are ye so foolish, having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh?"** And by the flesh he was referring to works of the law of Moses, which system he was trying to persuade them to reject.

Why the Law

Paul then asked a profound question, which he also answered: **"Why then the law? It was added on account of transgressions, until the seed would come to whom it was promised, which was arranged through agents in the hand of a mediator. Now a mediator is not of one, but God is one"** (3:19-20). The legal system of Moses was added because of transgressions. God never intended at first to burden his people with all that law. He imposed it upon them because they were so rebellious. And it was to last until the coming of Christ, because Paul said in the book of Romans: **"For Christ is the end of law for righteousness, to every man who believes"** (Romans 10:4). Legal systems are necessary for sinners, but not for righteous men. Remember, all that righteous men need is truth and knowledge to guide them, because they want to do right. Transgressors need the walls and chains of legalism to restrain them from evil, because they will not restrained themselves.

Paul also said the law was added **"until the seed would come to whom it was promised … ."** Jesus was the seed, and the promise was that he would bless all the nations. Paul also said the law **"was arranged through agents in the hand of a mediator."** Moses was the

mediator between the sons of Israel and Jehovah, but how was the law arranged in his hand through agents? The Bible says Jehovah gave the law to Moses for the people, and nowhere in the Old Testament does it say it was through agents. However, when the author of Hebrews was comparing the law of Moses with the good news of Christ, he said, **"For if the word spoken through agents became certain, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward, how will we escape, having neglected so great a salvation? Which first, having taken to be spoken by the Lord, was verified for us by those who heard; God also testifying simultaneously by signs and wonders, and by various powers and distributions of the Holy Spirit according to his will"** (Hebrews 2:2-4). He said the word became certain, and every violation was punished appropriately. It is clear that what he meant by the word was the law of Moses. And he said that was **"spoken through agents."**

God typically used agents to communicate with men, even when the text says it was Jehovah who was speaking. For example, the Bible says that when Abraham took his knife to slay Isaac an agent spoke to him, and yet the words were those of Jehovah: **"And the agent of Jehovah called to him out of heaven, and said, Abraham, Abraham. And he said, Here I am. And he said, Do not lay thy hand upon the lad, neither do thou anything to him. For now I know that thou fear God, since thou have not withheld thy son, thine only son, from me"** (Genesis 22:11-12). Apparently therefore, there were times when the Bible says Jehovah gave Moses laws, using agents to arrange them, but the agents were not mentioned. There are many details of the Old Testament that were not recorded. And we learn of some of them only from the New Testament. Another example of that concerns Lot in Sodom. Peter said that God **"rescued righteous Lot, being distressed by the conduct of the lawless in their licentiousness (for that righteous man dwelling among them day after day, in the sight and hearing of their lawless deeds, it anguished his righteous soul) …"** (Second Peter 2:7-8). Nothing is recorded in the Old Testament about how Lot felt about Sodom.

Paul also said that a mediator is not of one, but God is one. Certainly the meaning of the word mediator requires more than one be involved. For a mediator is somebody who works as a go-between for two or more others. God is one; God and Christ are one. They are so united they are in perfect oneness, and there is no need for a mediator for them. But mankind needs a mediator between us and God. Moses was the mediator for the sons of Israel. Christ is now the mediator for all men. As Paul said to Timothy, **"For there is one God, and one mediator of God and men, the man Jesus Christ, who gave himself a ransom for all …"** (First Timothy 2:5-6).

Paul next asked another question: **"Is the law therefore against the promises of God? May it not happen! For if a law was given that could make alive, truly righteousness would be from law. But scripture confined all things under sin, so that the promise from faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe. But before faith came we were kept in custody under law, having been confined for faith that was going to be revealed. So that the law became our schoolmaster for Christ, so that we might be**

made righteous from faith" (3:21-24). The law as a means of making men righteous before God has been abolished because there is no law that can make men righteous. And being righteous is the only way we can be saved for eternity. He also said the scripture confined all things under sin. That probably means the word of God has testified that all things are under sin, for God made it that way. Remember what he said in Romans: **"For God has confined all men in disobedience, so that he might be merciful to all"** (Romans 11:32). All men eventually sin because our spirits are not strong enough to live perfectly in this sinful world. The spirit of Jesus is so superior to ours that he was able. Therefore, no man can boast of equality with him. And that is a lesson God wants us all to learn.

In the above passage in Galatians Paul also told how they were kept in custody under the law, which was their schoolmaster for Christ. Paul was writing to Gentiles in Galatia, and the Gentiles were never under the law of Moses. However, they wanted to be subject to the law of Moses. Therefore, he explained why that law had been given to the sons of Israel. Formal laws are like walls and chains to restrain men from sin and force righteous living. The law of Moses was like a schoolmaster to the sons of Israel. Now a schoolmaster has authority over his students. The law had authority over the sons of Israel while teaching them the difference between right and wrong. It also proved to them how they were unable to be made righteous by law. That helped prepare them to seek salvation from faith in Christ.

Paul said further, **"But faith having come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster. For ye are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. For as many as were immersed into Christ have put on Christ. There is no Jew nor Greek, there is no bondman nor freeman, there is no male and female, for ye are all one in Christ Jesus"** (3:25-28). That passage clearly shows how faith only is not sufficient to put on Christ. Faith is necessary but not sufficient. For we must be immersed into Christ to become his disciples, and that immersion is in water, as numerous passages show. The following is but one example of many: **"And Philip having opened his mouth, and having begun from this scripture, he preached the good news to him—the man Jesus. And as they went on the way, they came to some water, and the eunuch says, Look, water! What prevents me to be immersed?"** (Acts 8:35-36).

Paul also spoke of the unity of all believers. He was certainly not speaking literally when he said **"There is no Jew nor Greek, there is no bondman nor freeman, there is no male and female … ."** He did not intend to cause bondmen to rebel against their masters, or women to rebel against men. He was speaking of our unity in the kingdom of God.

Heirs of God

Paul then said, **"And if ye are Christ's, then ye are Abraham's seed and heirs according to promise. But I say the heir, for as long a time as he is a child, differs nothing from a bondman though he is lord of all. Instead he is under stewards and managers until the time appointed from the father. And so when we were children, we were in bondage under the rudiments of the world. But when the fullness of the time came, God sent forth his Son, born from a woman, born under law, so that he might redeem those**

under law, so that we might receive the sonship. And because ye are sons, God sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father. So that thou are no longer a bondman but a son, and if a son, then an heir through Christ" (3:29-4:7). Notice he called them Abraham's seed, even though they were Gentiles. They were offspring of the faith of Abraham, his spiritual seed.

His example of a child heir applies to all mankind. Before we receive Christ we are spiritually immature, and are in bondage under the rudiments of the world. What he meant by the rudiments of the world were the law of the righteousness of God and the competing law of sin and of death, which struggle to control our behavior in this world. Every child is subject to those forces, even the Christ child, although he never sinned. The law (the law of God's righteousness in whatever form) was our schoolmaster to teach us about right from wrong. And when we sin we are condemned by the law of God and come under the bondage of death. But when we receive Christ he redeems us from that bondage **"so that we might receive the sonship."** And as sons we become heirs of God to inherit his promises of eternal life and glory with Christ.

Now many men, including Abraham, lived and died before God sent Christ into the world to redeem us from condemnation. The souls of those men can still be redeemed by him retroactively. How God will judge the men of the world who lived before Christ, or who have no awareness of him, is his decision. But the scriptures imply they will be redeemed by their faith in, and commitment to, the common laws of the righteousness of God, including opposition to sin and wickedness. Christ is the personification of the righteousness of God, and authentic faith in him includes faith in the righteousness of God. Before Christ men could still have faith in the righteousness of God, either from the law of Moses or from the law of righteousness in their conscience. Therefore, the blood of Christ will redeem them also.

An example of such kind of faith is told about Moses even before God called him: **"By faith Moses, having become great, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, having chosen rather to be mistreated with the people of God, than to have the pleasure of sin temporarily. Having esteemed the vilification of the Christ greater wealth than the treasures of Egypt, for he focused toward the recompense of reward"** (Hebrews 11:24-26). How was Moses aware of the vilification of the Christ? The Hebrews were chosen by God to preserve righteousness in the world, and the Egyptians must have heard of that from the sons of Israel who lived in their land. The world has always vilified God's righteousness, and Christ is the personification of that righteousness. Therefore, the vilification of the Christ in that passage must refer to the vilification of God's common laws of righteousness, including their vilification in Egypt during the time of Moses.

Next Paul said to the Galatians, **"But of course not knowing God then, ye were in bondage to those in nature who are not gods, but now knowing God, but rather being known by God, how is it ye turn again to the weak and destitute elements to which ye desire again to be in bondage anew? Ye observe days, and months, and times, and years. I am afraid of you, lest somehow I have labored toward you in vain"** (4:8-11).

Since he was writing to Gentiles many of them had been unaware of Jehovah, or at least had been unaware of what he was like. Therefore, they worshiped mythical things of false religion in ignorance. Millions of souls in the world still worship mythical things in ignorance, and it keeps them in bondage to weak and destitute elements of the world. What Paul meant by weak and destitute elements were ideas and ways of living that were either harmful or greatly inferior to the things of the new covenant of Christ.

The example he gave was observing **"days, and months, and times, and years."** The law of Moses contained many commands to observe days, months, times, and years. Observing those times was for the purpose of doing good things, such as resting from labor, worshiping God, and helping the poor. However, rigid legalistic adherence to fixed schedules, as the law required, is a much less productive way to achieve those things. And false religions are far more counter-productive. For they promote many destructive ideas and ways of living. And the more committed people are to their false religions and ideologies the more they think and behave in harmful and counter-productive ways. The zealous believers of communism, Islam, and Hinduism are good examples. On the other hand, the more people commit themselves to the good news of Jesus Christ the more they are ennobled, strengthened, prosper, and do good to themselves and others.

Paul's Love for Them

Next Paul speaks much more personally, saying to them, **"I beseech you, brothers, become like me, because I also am like ye. Ye wronged me in nothing. But ye know that through a weakness of the flesh I preached the good news to you the first time. And ye did not disdain, nor did ye reject my trial in my flesh, but ye received me as an agent of God, as Christ Jesus. Where then is your satisfaction? For I testify to you, that if possible, having plucked your eyes out, ye would have given them to me. So then have I become your enemy telling you the truth?"** (4:12-16). Those are touching words that show his great love for them, and theirs for him. They also show his greater love for the cause of Christ. For he was willing to be regarded their enemy in order to tell them the truth.

Regarding Paul's weakness of the flesh, nobody knows what it was, but the text here and in some other letters implies it was poor vision. Physical disabilities always tend to lower the overall esteem of the sufferer. For that reason president Franklin Roosevelt deliberately tried to conceal the paralysis of his legs whenever he was seen in public. I rejoice to say that modern Americans are attempting to correct that prejudice.

Paul spoke more personally to them because he had been rebuking them sharply, and that grieved him. He had great love for all his brothers in Christ, and no righteous man likes to hurt those he loves. Therefore, he reminded them of how much they thought of him even with his weakness of the flesh. He then wondered if they would see him as their enemy because he was telling them the truth, which required rebuking their error. I grieve to say that I have been seen as an enemy to some of my brothers in Christ by telling them the truth about errors they were committing. Paul was seen as an enemy by many (perhaps even most) of his Jewish countrymen when he told them they were wrong to reject Christ. We

cannot stop trying to correct error just because we might be seen as an enemy by some people we love. Remember what Paul said earlier: **"For if I were still pleasing men I would not be a bondman of Christ"** (1:10).

He then spoke about the motives of those who were leading them astray. He said, **"They are zealous for you but not honorably. They want to exclude you, so that ye may be zealous for them. But to be zealous of is always good in a good thing, and not only when I am present with you"** (4:17-18). Displaying zealousness for groups is often used as a method for men to gain control over them. And once such men gain control they become autocratic. It is common in politics, and I have seen it happen even in churches. Ministers work hard to gain the confidence and allegiance of the congregation by showing zealousness for them so they can keep the members passive followers who are zealous for them. Notice, however, that Paul does not condemn being zealous of, if it is for a good thing.

Paul spoke further of his affection for them, saying, **"My little children, of whom I suffer birth pains again until Christ is formed in you. But I was wishing to be present with you now and to change my tone, because I am perplexed at you"** (4:19-20). In the Bible addressing another adult as a little child was a show of the highest affection. Paul also showed how much love he had for them, and how troubled he was about them, by comparing his feelings with birth pains. Birth pains are very severe, and Paul was experiencing equivalent sorrow because he was having to rebuke them for their error.

An Allegory

After that he gave an allegory: **"Tell me those desiring to be under law, do ye not hear the law? For it is written that Abraham had two sons, one from the servant girl, and one from the freewoman. But in fact, the man from the servant girl was born according to flesh, but the man from the freewoman through promise. Which things are allegorized, for these are two covenants, indeed one from mount Sinai giving birth for bondage, which is Hagar. For Hagar is mount Sinai in Arabia, and it corresponds to the present Jerusalem, and is in bondage with her children"** (4:21-25). Because Abraham's wife Sarah remained barren even to her old age she graciously suggested he bear a son by her handmaid Hagar. The result was Ishmael, but God would not accept him as the son of promise. Sarah finally did bear the son of promise, who was Isaac. Paul is comparing Hagar with the law of Moses. Mount Sinai was where it was given, and the temple was built at Jerusalem where all the rituals were held afterward. In the allegory Hagar's children were the adherents to the law of Moses, and Paul said they were in bondage, meaning in bondage with that legal system.

Then he said, **"But the Jerusalem above is free, which is mother of us all. For it is written, Rejoice, thou barren woman not giving birth. Burst forth and shout, thou not suffering birth pains, because many more are the children of the desolate than of her who has the husband"** (4:26-27). The Jerusalem above is the heavenly one described by John in his great vision (see Revelation 21), and it is the mother of us all, meaning all disciples

of Christ. The heavenly Jerusalem was even called the bride of Christ. And since we will be its inhabitants, it is figuratively our mother.

The passage Paul quoted about the barren woman is from Isaiah (54:1), but it does not seem to refer to Sarah. For although Sarah had been barren, she did have a husband. It is a difficult passage to interpret, but I will offer an explanation. Perhaps it means the heavenly Jerusalem would have been empty (barren) without Christ to redeem us. But with our salvation the heavenly Jerusalem has become our mother. She became our mother before **"the marriage of the lamb"** (Revelation 19:7), which is when Christ (the lamb) receives his bride. Hence, she has more children than she who has a husband. However, we are still legitimate children because we have been legally adopted by God. And the bride of the lamb is given these adopted children (meaning the disciples of Christ) before her marriage, for the children of the heavenly Jerusalem will not be conceived in heaven. Therefore, the heavenly Jerusalem will apparently be fully occupied when it is received by the lamb, Jesus Christ.

Paul then explained how we are like Isaac: **"Now we, brothers, who correspond to Isaac, are children of promise. But just as then, the man who was born according to flesh persecuted the man according to Spirit, so also now. Nevertheless, what does the scripture say? Send away the servant girl and her son, for the son of the servant girl will, no, not inherit with the son of the freewoman. So then, brothers, we are not children of a servant girl, but of the freewoman"** (4:28-31).

The early Christians were not only persecuted by the Jews, but by many Gentiles as well. Indeed, Jesus warned his disciples, **"If the world hates you, know that it has hated me before you. If ye were of the world, the world would love its own, but because ye are not of the world (instead I chose you out of the world), because of this the world hates you"** (John 15:18-19). And Paul said to Timothy, **"But thou have closely followed my doctrine, conduct, purpose, faith, longsuffering, love, perseverance, persecutions, sufferings, such as happened to me at Antioch, at Iconium, at Lystra. I endured such persecutions, and the Lord rescued me out of them all. And also all those who want to live devoutly in Christ Jesus will be persecuted. But evil men and impostors will go forward to worse, leading astray and being led astray"** (Second Timothy 3:10-13). Nevertheless, Paul said our persecutors, as figurative children of the servant girl, will not inherit with us.

After giving that allegory, and explaining how it applied to us and to those who reject Christ, he encouraged them again, saying, **"Stand firm therefore in the liberty in which Christ freed us, and be not entangled again in a yoke of bondage"** (4:5:1). As disciples of Christ we are freed from any kind of legal system with God. All legal systems are tangles of rules and regulations that restrict and bind men blindly and mechanically. They are a yoke of bondage for all who are subject to them. Such yokes are necessary for souls who have not the love of righteousness within them. They are like putting the wheels of automobiles on rails. And how would you like it if you could only drive that way?

FALLING FROM GRACE

Then he said, **"Behold, I Paul say to you, that if ye are circumcised, Christ will benefit you nothing. And I solemnly declare again to every man who is circumcised, that he is obligated to do the whole law. Ye were discharged from the Christ, ye who are made righteous by law. Ye have fallen from grace. For we through the Spirit, from faith, wait for a hope of righteousness. For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision avails anything nor uncircumcision, but faith working through love"** (5:2-6). Paul was of course referring to the rite of circumcision as part of the law of Moses, and not merely the surgical procedure. There is nothing wrong with Christians or their children being circumcised simply for health purposes. However, Paul is here stating plainly that we cannot rely on works of the law of Moses and still be disciples of Christ.

The only reason Paul and other Jewish citizens continued to obey the law of Moses was because that was the law of their country. The Jewish citizens who were Christians continued to obey the required laws of Moses, but not as a means of serving God; it was to obey the state. However, that practice did not last very long, because the Jewish state was completely destroyed and its people scattered abroad forty years after Jesus began his ministry. And now it is completely impossible for anybody to obey all the laws of Moses.

Jews obey some that can be obeyed, such as circumcision and the sabbath, but as a legal system the law of Moses can never be revived. And any Christian, Gentile or Jew, who seeks to serve God by works of the law has **"fallen from grace."** No matter how well meaning they are, Jewish Christians who continue to obey some of the laws of Moses as part of their religious practices are making a tragic mistake, and I fear for their souls. What do they think they can gain by that dead system? Paul and the other apostles were required as citizens to obey those laws, but after the destruction of Israel and the temple no Jew is required to obey them.

Nowhere in the entire New Testament does it say that Jews must obey the laws of Moses as part of the new covenant of Christ. As Paul taught the Galatians, they must abandon the whole legal system and all of its laws as ways to be made righteous before God. If they want to circumcise their children and rest on the seventh day of the week, they are free to do so, because Paul said, **"All things are lawful for me, but not all things are expedient"** (First Corinthians 6:12). However, they should never say they are doing such things as requirements by God, nor should they require such things of anybody else.

Next Paul spoke about whoever was persuading them to obey the law of Moses. He said, **"Ye were running well. Who hindered you, not to obey the truth? This persuasion is not from him who calls you. A little leaven leavens the whole lump. I have confidence toward you in the Lord, that ye will think no other thing. But the man who troubles you will bear the verdict, whoever he may be. But I, brothers, if I still preach circumcision, why am I still persecuted? Then the stumbling-block of the cross has been abolished. O that those who trouble you would even cut it all off"** (5:7-12).

Jesus was the one who called them to salvation, and Paul taught them the truth about him. Then after Paul left them somebody began hindering them to obey the truth by saying they must obey the law of Moses. And the influence of that man was affecting the whole congregation like leaven in a lump of dough. That is why false teachings can never be tolerated even by a single person; it will change them like leaven in dough. Yet Paul was confident they would accept what he was writing them.

Paul said the man who was troubling them would bear the verdict (his declaration of guilt). He did not say anything about how he would be punished, but the words clearly indicate he would be. He also spoke of his persecution for teaching the good news of Christ instead of the law of Moses. Here is the record of one example from the book of Acts: **"But Gallio being proconsul of Achaia, the Jews with one accord attacked Paul and brought him to the judgment seat, saying, This man is persuading men to worship God against the law"** (Acts 18:12-13). Paul sometimes referred to the good news of Christ as the cross, which has come to symbolize it. And he said the cross—the good news of Christ—was a stumbling-block to the Jews because it meant discarding the law of Moses as the way to serve God and achieve salvation.

The law of Moses had become a proud mark of identity for the Jews, which they could boast about. Abandoning the law meant giving up their distinction as special race chosen by God above all others. The pride of most Jews would not let them do that, thereby causing them to stumble. Nevertheless, there were some Jews, such as the apostles, who accepted fully the new covenant of Christ.

Then Paul spoke generally about those who troubled the Galatians, saying he even wished they would go further and cut the entire organ off, meaning to emasculate themselves. That is strong language against those who were promoting obedience to the law of Moses.

After that he said, **"For ye, brothers, were called to liberty, only not liberty for an opportunity to the flesh, but be servants to each other through love. For the whole law is fulfilled in one word, in this: Thou shall love thy neighbor as thyself. But if ye bite and devour each other, watch out that ye be not consumed by each other"** (5:13-15). We as Christians have been given liberty by God; we are freed from the restrictions of a legal system in our service to him. The only thing from the law that is required is that we love our neighbors as ourselves (Leviticus 19:18), which fulfills the whole law anyway, that and our love for God. But we are not to use our liberty to indulge our lusts. He also warned against being aggressive and hostile to each other, most of which is done verbally with gossip and slander.

Flesh Versus Spirit

Then he contrasted the nature of the flesh with that of the Spirit of God. He said, **"But I say, walk in the Spirit and ye will, no, not fulfill a lust of the flesh. For the flesh desires against the Spirit, and the Spirit is against the flesh. For these are hostile to each other, so that whatever these things are ye may want, ye may not do. But if ye are led by the Spirit ye are not under law"** (5:16-18). Every man has been endowed with the power of

free will. Therefore, we can choose to live to satisfy the desires of our material self, or to walk according to the desires of the Spirit of God, which are things of righteousness and holiness. And Paul says the two are hostile to each other. The lusts of our flesh urge us to commit sin instead of doing right things, but the Spirit urges us to restrain and suppress our harmful impulses and appetites, and instead work toward doing good. They are mutually antagonistic.

What he meant by not doing the things we want is probably because our flesh is under the law of sin. Paul elaborated about that in the book of Romans. That was where he expressed his frustration about not being able to live a perfect life. I explain some of that in my comments there, and more elaborately in Part 4:4, which is about our spirit and our flesh. After saying we do not do the things we want, he said if we were led by the Spirit we were not under law. That means although we cannot avoid making some mistakes, if we strive to walk by the ways of the Spirit we will not be condemned for those mistakes. We will not be condemned because we are not under a legal system with God. He will chastise us when we err but he will not reject us with sinners who walk according to the flesh.

Paul then gives specific examples of the kinds of things produced by the flesh versus those produced by the Spirit: **"Now the works of the flesh are apparent, which are, adultery, fornication, uncleanness, licentiousness, idolatry, sorcery, hatreds, strifes, jealousies, wraths, selfish ambitions, dissensions, factions, envyings, murders, intoxications, revelings, and things like these, of which I forewarn you, as I also did forewarn, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness, self-control. Against such things there is no law. And those of the Christ have crucified the flesh with its passions and the lusts"** (5:19-24).

You can here see exactly why the flesh and the Spirit are hostile to each other. The flesh urges us to commit adultery and fornication, while the Spirit urges us to have self-control and faithfulness. The flesh provokes us to hatreds, strifes, jealousies, selfish-ambitions and other such evil things, while the Spirit urges us for love, joy, peace, kindness, and the like. The flesh urges us to indulge in intoxications and revelings, while the Spirit urges us to live by goodness and longsuffering. It is obvious we cannot walk by the Spirit and still fulfill the lusts of our flesh.

After listing those example of the fruits of the Spirit, he said there was no law against such things. The nations of the world have many laws, and many of them outlaw the works of the flesh. When America was a nation led by Christians most of those things Paul listed were against the law. Since the country has become pagan most of them are now legal. Fornication, idolatry, sorcery, even revelings are all now legal. Of course, murder is still a crime, and in some states adultery still is, although it is rarely if ever enforced. Paul also warned that those who practice such works of the flesh will not inherit the kingdom of God. They will inherit the lake of fire, which is hell. We, however, as disciples of Christ **"have crucified the flesh with its passions and the lusts."** We have figuratively crucified our flesh by

putting to death (suppressing) its passions and lusts, the urges that would lead us to commit sins.

MOTIVES

After a few other words of admonition Paul again spoke about those who were trying to persuade them to keep the law of Moses. He said, **"As many as desire to make a good impression in flesh, these compel you to be circumcised, only so that they may not be persecuted for the cross of the Christ. For not even those who have been circumcised themselves keep law, but they want you to be circumcised, so that they may boast in thy flesh"** (6:12-13). Those who were urging them to obey the law of Moses were not doing so from noble motives. They wanted to appease the Jews who were hostile to Jesus Christ, and to boast about making proselytes of them. But as Paul said, they were hypocrites who themselves did not keep the law. The Jews did not then and the Jews do not now keep all the laws of Moses. They pick and choose the ones they want and ignore the others. Remember what Jesus said to the Jews: **"Did not Moses give you the law, and none of you does the law?"** (John 7:19). That has always been and always will be true.

In contrast, Paul's motives were unselfish and noble. For he said, **"But may it not be from me to boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world. For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision avails anything nor uncircumcision, but a new creation. And as many as will march by this standard, peace upon them, and mercy, and upon the Israel of God"** (6:14-16). He did not want to boast in anything but the good news of Christ. He had a deep and abiding love for our Lord, and he willingly sacrificed his worldly life for him. Paul had a very good life as a Pharisee, and he would certainly have achieved prominence and leadership in that powerful sect had he continued with it. Yet for the sake of our Lord his entire worldly life was crucified to him: his friends, his career, his reputation among his countrymen, perhaps most his kinfolks. And he never had any regrets; such was his love for and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ.

Those were among his last words in the book of Galatians, and he again emphasized the futility of reliance on anything different from the new covenant of Christ. What is necessary is our being a new creation as begotten again by the Spirit when the old man of the flesh is buried, and we put on the new man of the Spirit. As Paul said in Romans, **"We were buried therefore with him through the immersion into death, so that as Christ was raised up from the dead through the glory of the Father, so also we may walk in newness of life"** (Romans 6:4).

Part 3:9

LAW IN HEBREWS

JESUS, OUR HIGH PRIEST

The book of Hebrews is primarily about the supremacy of Jesus Christ and the new covenant. Therefore, many comparisons are made with him and the law of Moses. The author first shows how Jesus is superior to Moses and even to the heavenly agents. And he explained the necessity of Jesus' mission on earth. Among those words, he told how Jesus is our new high priest: **"Therefore he was obligated to be made like his brothers in accordance with all things, so that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in things toward God, in order to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. For in that he himself has suffered, having been tempted, he is able to help those being tempted. Because of which, holy brothers, companions of a heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our affirmation, Jesus Christ, who was faithful to him who appointed him, as also was Moses in all his house.**

"For this man was considered worthy of more glory than Moses, by so much as he who built it has more esteem than the house. For every house is built by some man, but he who built all things is God. And Moses was indeed faithful in all his house as a servant, for a testimony of the things that were going to be spoken, but Christ as a Son over his house, whose house we are, if only we keep in possession our confidence and pride of hope, firm until the end" (2:17-3:6).

A priest is an intermediary between God and men. The high priests of Israel were commanded by the law to offer animal sacrifices once a year as atonement to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. It was to be on the tenth day of their seventh month, and it was called the day of atonement. Jesus is our heavenly high priest, and by his earthly sacrifice he became the atonement that made reconciliation for our sins. Moses was faithful over the house of God (in the wilderness) as a servant, but Christ is faithful over the house of God (the church) as a Son. And he is worthy of more glory than Moses, by so much as the builder has more esteem than the house. For the Bible says that Christ was the co-creator of all things with God (see John 1:1-3 and Colossians 1:16).

Next the author told how the ancient sons of Israel continuously rebelled against God. Jehovah was very longsuffering with the generation of the Exodus. However, when they even refused to invade the promised land, he cursed them to die in the wilderness. They had been oppressed slaves in Egypt, and the promised land was the rest he was going to give them. But they were so rebellious that he swore in his wrath they would not enter into his rest. And the author warned the reader not to be rebellious and disobedient like they were. For we too have been called to God's rest, but this one is in heaven.

The author continued speaking of Jesus as our high priest: **"Having therefore a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us take hold of the affirmation. For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our**

weaknesses, but who was tempted in all things in the same way, without sin. Let us therefore come near with boldness to the throne of grace, so that we may take mercy, and may find grace for timely help" (4:14-16). The affirmation he spoke of is the proclamation that Jesus is our heavenly high priest. And we should therefore accept that truth, so that we can take mercy and find grace from God. For Jesus knows of our struggles and weaknesses, having himself been tempted in every way.

Chosen by God

The author said further about him, **"For every high priest taken from men is appointed for men in things toward God, so that he may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins. Who can be gentle to those who are ignorant and led astray, since he himself is also encompassed with weakness. And because of this he is obligated, as for the people, so also for himself, to offer for sins. And not any man takes the honor to himself, but being called by God, just as also Aaron. So also Christ did not glorify himself to become a high priest, but it was he who said to him** [in Psalm 2]**, Thou are my Son, today I have begotten thee. (And just as he says in another** [in Psalm 110]**, Thou are a priest into the age according to the order of Melchizedek.)"** (5:1-6).

In the law of Moses every high priest was required to offer gifts and sacrifices for the sins of the people and for his own sins. And every high priest was chosen by God, either directly as with Aaron or indirectly through inheritance. Also every high priest was chosen from men so they could **"be gentle to those who are ignorant and led astray,"** because they too were encompassed with weakness.

So too Christ was chosen from men by God to be our high priest. He too can be gentle to those who are ignorant and led astray, for he too was encompassed with weakness, being in a body of flesh and subject to every temptation. However, unlike every other high priest he never sinned. Therefore, the sacrifice of his blood that he offered on the cross was not for his own sins but for ours. As Paul said in Colossians, **"And you, being formerly alienated and hostile in mind, in works, in things evil. But now he has reconciled in the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblemished and unblameable before him"** (Colossians 1:21-22). The author of Hebrews elaborates more about Melchizedek that farther on.

Next the author explains how Jesus was designated by God to be our high priest: **"Who, in the days of his flesh, having offered up both prayers and supplications with strong shouting and tears to him who was able to save him from death, and who was heard because of his reverence, although being a Son, he learned obedience from the things that he suffered. And having been fully perfected, he became the source of eternal salvation to all those who obey him, having been designated by God a high priest according to the order of Melchizedek"** (5:7-10).

That is one of the most controversial passages of the New Testament. It is controversial because it shows how much Jesus was subject to human weakness, although he never sinned. And for those who claim Jesus was equal in every way with God the Father, it is hard to see

him as having weakness. Nevertheless, this passage clearly reveals how Jesus was fully subject to human weakness. Remember, the author earlier said Jesus was tempted in all things just as every other man. However, the Bible says God is without temptation of evils, and himself tempts no man (see James 1:13). And now it describes how much Jesus agonized about enduring death. The strong shouting was no doubt covert, within his heart and not aloud. Some translations say he was heard because he feared. However, Jesus did not fear death, he hated death. For he and the Father are the very epitome of life.

What makes the passage especially controversial is because it says Jesus **"learned obedience from the things that he suffered."** Superficially that could be seen as implying he was not obedient before his suffering. However, that would contradict many other passages that tell how Jesus never sinned. But then what does it mean? Perhaps it means the obedience of the Son of God was thoroughly tested and confirmed by his suffering in this world. And that made him fully perfected to be our eternal high priest, and **"the source of eternal salvation to all those who obey him."** Perhaps the trials and tribulations of his life taught him absolute obedience even though he was never disobedient. No doubt he was obedient to the Father even before being born into this world. But he could never learn what it was to be absolutely obedient without coming to this world of sin, living in the flesh, and being tempted and suffering fully.

Solid Food

After explaining those things the author rebuked those to whom he was writing. He had mentioned Melchizedek, and then he said, **"About whom, much subject matter from us is also difficult to explain, since ye have become sluggish in hearing. For also men who ought to be teachers because of the time, ye have need again for some man to teach you the rudiments of the beginning of the oracles of God, and have become men who have need of milk, and not of solid food. For every man partaking of milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, for he is childlike"** (5:11-13).

He said they had ample time to be prepared for more difficult subject matter, but they were still not ready. And I have seen that same situation occurring often in my lifetime. Men who have been Christians for many years, and who have had access to Bibles and Bible study aids, are still choked by the solid food of the word of God. And they remain childlike in their knowledge of it, and unskilled in their use of it. I think that is one of the consequences of and reasons for the popularity of the preacher-pastor system, where one man in the congregation does virtually all the preaching, and everybody else listens passively.

He said further, **"But solid food is for mature men, those having their sensibilities trained through practice for the discernment of both good and evil. Therefore having left the word of the primacy of Christ, let us be brought forward to perfection, not again laying a foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God, of doctrine of washings, and of laying on of hands, and of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment. And this we will do, if of course God will permit"** (5:14-6:3). Every Christian should work to become mature in his knowledge of and his skill with the truth

of God. Repentance, faith, and doctrine of washings (which probably refers to immersion in water for remission of sins) are basic things required. The laying on of hands was done to receive a gift of miraculous power of the Holy Spirit, which was needed to verify the authenticity of the new covenant of Christ until the New Testament was written. It was a temporary expedient like the miracles of Moses' time. The testimony of those who witnessed Jesus is now available in the New Testament, the words of which are sufficient to verify the truth of the new covenant. Who wrote the New Testament, how it was written, and what it says are all sufficient evidence it is from God. And anybody who loves truth and righteousness, and who reads it, will know it is what it claims to be.

The Order of Melchizedek

The author spoke a warning about forsaking Christ. Then he gave some words of encouragement, including a description of how God made a promise to Abraham and his heirs, and he confirmed it with an oath. Jesus our redeemer is the fulfillment of that promise, and we who belong to him are the heirs of Abraham, being spiritual offspring of his faith. And the author said our hope in Christ was an anchor of the soul for us: **"Which we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and that enters into the interior of the veil, where the forerunner, Jesus, entered for us, having become a high priest into the age according to the order of Melchizedek"** (6:19-20).

Jesus is our high priest into the age, because his priesthood is according to the order of Melchizedek, which is an endless one. The author explains, **"For this Melchizedek, king of Salem, priest of God Most High, having met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings, also blessed him. To whom also Abraham divided a tenth of all.** [That story is told in Genesis 18.] **Being actually translated, first, king of righteousness, and then also, king of Salem, which is king of peace, without father, without mother, without genealogy, having neither beginning of days nor end of life, but having been made like the Son of God, remains a priest continually"** (7:1-3).

That is also a difficult passage to understand. Perhaps the author is using Melchizedek symbolically, as some others have suggested. Since no record of his genealogy, his birth, or his death is given, then Melchizedek is said to have **"neither beginning of days nor end of life,"** and therefore he **"remains a priest continually,"** that is, in the figurative sense. He remains a priest continually in the record, because the record never says he died. At least that is one theory that has been suggested, but it seems too contrived. Some claim Jesus was Melchizedek, but that makes no sense to me. For if that were true the author would have said so.

Perhaps Melchizedek was an agent from heaven sent for some reason to be the priest and king of Salem. For the author later speaks of unrecognized agents having been sent to earth, when he said, **"Do not forget love for strangers, for by this some lodged agents, unaware"** (13:2). Perhaps Melchizedek was an agent of God who is also a priest in heaven. The heavenly world does contain a vast civilization of agents, as the author also says when he spoke of **"the city of a living God, a heavenly Jerusalem, and to myriads of agents**

…" (12:22). And perhaps they too have priests, of which one is Melchizedek. His purpose on earth may even have been so that he could be referred to in the very way being done in this book. The Bible records a time when Jesus' disciples asked him who sinned to cause a certain man to be born blind. He replied, **"Neither this man sinned, nor his parents, but that the works of God might be manifested in him"** (John 9:3). That may also be the reason for Melchizedek; namely, to provide evidence for what the author is teaching here. Of course, to suggest he was an agent from heaven is conjecture, but it is another possible explanation of his having no genealogy, **"having been made like the Son of God."** (Jesus did have a legal genealogy through Joseph, but not an actual biological one.)

Next the author said, **"And notice how great this man was, to whom also the patriarch Abraham gave a tenth out of the best spoils. Now indeed those of the sons of Levi who receive the priesthood have commandment to collect tithes from the people according to the law, that is, of their brothers, although having come out of the loins of Abraham. But the man who did not descend from them has received tithes from Abraham, and has blessed the man having the promises. And without all contradiction the inferior is blessed by the superior. And here indeed, men who die receive tithes, but there, he who is testified about that he lives. And, so to speak, Levi also, the man who receives tithes, has paid tithes through Abraham, for he was still in the loins of his father when Melchizedek met him"** (7:4-10).

The Jews adhered strictly to a mans' genealogical qualifications for serving as a priest. For example, when they were rebuilding the temple in Jerusalem after their Babylonian exile they began selecting priests to serve. Here is what the Bible says about some of them: **"These sought their registration *among* those that were reckoned by genealogy, but they were not found. Therefore they were deemed polluted and put away from the priesthood"** (Ezra 2:62). That was another reason the Jews could not accept the priesthood of Jesus; he was not a Levite. Here the author is showing that Melchizedek was superior to Abraham because he blessed him, and **"without all contradiction the inferior is blessed by the superior."** Therefore, the priesthood of Melchizedek was superior to that of Levi. For since Abraham gave him a tithe, then in one sense even Levi, who was commanded to receive tithes from the other sons of Israel, paid tithes to Melchizedek. He did so through Abraham because he existed in his genetic chemistry, being latent in Abraham's descendants until he was conceived centuries later.

The author continued to compare the priesthood of Melchizedek with that of the levitical priesthood, saying, **"If indeed therefore perfection was through the Levitical priesthood (for under it the people had received the law), what further need is there for another priest to arise according to the order of Melchizedek, and not be designated according to the order of Aaron? For the priesthood being changed, of necessity a change of law also occurs. For he of whom these things are spoken pertains to another tribe, from which no man has attended to the altar. For it is evident that our Lord arose out of Judah, regarding which tribe Moses spoke nothing about the priesthood"** (7:11-14). The levitical priesthood of the law was unable to make the people perfect in righ-

teousness because atonement for sin was necessary every year. The atoning sacrifice of Jesus was necessary only once. Having been perfect in purity and holiness—the sinless Son of God—his was the perfect sacrifice that brought eternal atonement for all who belong to him. And Jesus having become our new high priest required a change in law away from the old law of Moses. For the law of Moses required the levitical priesthood. And with the perfect offering of Jesus for atonement, the Levitical priesthood no longer has any meaning.

He said further, **"And it is still far more evident, if according to the likeness of Melchizedek, there arises another priest, who has become, not according to a law of a carnal commandment, but according to the power of an indestructible life"** (7:15-16). Jesus was chosen by God to be our new high priest because of the power of his indestructible life. His life was indestructible because he never sinned. For remember, Paul said, **"The sting of death is sin …"** (First Corinthians 15:56). Jesus never sinned, and consequently his soul never died; only his body died on the cross, and that was caused by the sin of the Jews. When we sin our spirit continues to exist, but it is condemned to die an eternal death in hell. It is a death that never ends, and gives no rest for the condemned. It is called the second death in the book of Revelation (see 20:14 and 21:8). And our only hope of salvation is to be begotten again, begotten from the Spirit of God through faith in Christ, to put on the new man uncondemned and free from the bondage of sin.

The author refers again to the passage in Psalm 110: **"For he** [Jehovah] **testifies, Thou are a priest into the age according to the order of Melchizedek"** (7:17). That is clear evidence from the Old Testament that God was going to choose another priest, an eternal priest (into the age), not of the tribe of Levi. For the psalmist said the eternal priest was according to the order of Melchizedek. And as the author of Hebrews said before, **"For the priesthood being changed, of necessity a change of law also occurs"** (7:12).

He said the law was annulled and a better way to approach God was given: **"For indeed there becomes an annulment of a preceding commandment because of its weakness and uselessness (for the law made nothing fully perfect), and an introduction of a better hope, through which we approach God"** (7:18-19). And the author points out how God emphasized he would make a new eternal priest by swearing to it: **"And inasmuch as it is not without an oath. For actually those who become priests are so without an oath, but he with an oath, because of him who says to him, The Lord swore and will not change his mind, Thou are a priest into the age according to the order of Melchizedek"** (7:20-21). And that oath is also in Psalm 110 of the Old Testament.

Then the author tells how Jesus is that new priest. **"By so much, Jesus has become the surety of a better covenant. And of course those who have become priests are more, because of being prevented to continue by death, but he, because of his remaining into the age, has the priesthood unchangeable. Whereupon he is able also to save to the uttermost those who come to God through him, being always alive in order to intercede on their behalf. For such a high priest is fitting for us, devout, innocent, undefiled, separated from sinners, and having become higher than the heavens. Who has no need to offer up sacrifices each day, as those high priests, first for his own sins, then for those**

of the people, for this he did, once, when he offered up himself. For the law appoints men high priests who have weakness, but the word of the oath after the law, a Son who has been fully perfected into the age" (7:22-28).

Jesus is the better priest for the better covenant. First, he always lives to intercede for us, while the Leviticus priests always needed replacing because of their deaths. Second, he has no need to offer sacrifices daily as they did, because of the perfect sacrifice of his own blood. Third, he is a perfect high priest, without the weaknesses of the Levitical priests, undefiled and higher than the heavens, fully qualified to appeal to God on our behalf. And besides those things, he loves us with an undying love. O my brothers, cling to him as our high priest. Love him and our heavenly Father above all things with your undying love. He will accept nothing less, because he deserves nothing less.

Next the author says, **"Now a summation about the things being spoken is, we have such a high priest who was seated at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens, a minister of the holy things, and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord erected and not man. For every high priest is appointed in order to offer both gifts and sacrifices, whereupon it is necessary for this man also to have something that he may offer. For certainly if he were on earth, he would not even be a priest, there being the priests who offer the gifts according to the law, who serve for an example and shadow of the heavenly things. Just as Moses who was divinely warned while going to complete the tabernacle, for he says, See thou make all things according to the pattern that was shown thee on the mountain. But now he has obtained a superior ministry, by so much as he is also the mediator of a superior covenant, which has been enacted upon superior promises"** (8:1-6). Jesus is our eternal high priest and minister of the heavenly tabernacle created by God. (The author says more about the tabernacle farther on.) And he is the mediator of a superior covenant, which is the good news of Christ. And through that covenant we have hope of a promised land in the heavens and an eternal rest there.

The Old and New Covenants

Then he contrasts the old covenant with the new covenant: **"For if that first one was faultless, no place would have been sought for a second. For, finding fault with them, he says, Behold, the days come, says the Lord, and I will perfect a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah. Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day when I took them by my hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt. Because they did not continue in my covenant, and I disregarded them, says the Lord. Because this is the covenant that I will ordain with the house of Israel after those days, says the Lord, giving my laws into their mind, and I will write them on their hearts. And I will be to them for a God, and they will be to me for a people. And they will, no, not teach each man his fellow citizen, and each man his brother, saying, Know the Lord, because all will know me, from their small as far as their great. Because I will be merciful to their iniquities, and their sins and their lawlessness I will no, not further remember. In saying, New, he has made the first old. And what is becoming old and obsolete is near disappearance"** (8:7-13).

That passage includes a lengthy quotation from the prophet Jeremiah (see Jeremiah 31:31-34), and it obviously refers to the good news of Christ. Members of the new covenant have God's laws in their minds and written on their hearts, because a man cannot become a disciple of Christ until he learns about him and accepts his good news of salvation. Therefore, there is no need to teach any of them about who the Lord is. That is needed before they can become a part of the new covenant.

In contrast, members of the old covenant were born into it as sons of Israel, and needed to be taught who the Lord was. Members of God's new covenant are now his chosen people. And he will no longer hold our sins against us, because we are his sons and his daughters under grace. The words that say he will no longer remember our sins are figurative not literal. For he will hold them against us if we later prove unworthy. See Matthew 18:23-34 for proof of that.

Notice in the last part of that passage he said the old covenant was **"becoming old and obsolete"** and **"is near disappearance."** He wrote this after Christ was resurrected and his church was established. Yet he did not say the old covenant was obsolete and had disappeared. It was *becoming* old and *near* disappearance. That is further evidence that the law of Moses was still in effect for the Jews who were citizens of Israel. As explained in the book of Romans, the law of Moses was the law of their land even after the church of Christ was established. For the rulers of the Jewish nation rejected Jesus, and retained the legal system of Moses. Therefore, Christian Jews as citizens of Israel were required to obey that law. However, when their nation and temple were utterly destroyed the old covenant was then obsolete and disappeared. The surviving Jews who rejected Jesus retained some of the scraps of it, added many other rules and regulations, and created the false religion of Judaism.

The tabernacle

After that the author tells what was in the tabernacle: **"Now indeed therefore the first had ordinances of divine service and the earthly sanctuary. For a tabernacle was prepared, the first in which was also the lampstand, and the table, and the presentation of the loaves, which is called the Holy place. And behind the second curtain, the tabernacle called the Holy of holies, having a golden censer, and the ark of the covenant overlaid entirely in gold, in which was a golden pot holding the manna, and Aaron's rod that budded, and the tablets of the covenant. And above it were cherubim of glory overshadowing the place of forgiveness, about which things it is not now to speak in detail"** (9:1-5).

Then he tells about the duties of the priests: **"And these things thus having been prepared, the priests indeed enter into the first part of the tabernacle continually, accomplishing the services. But into the second part, the high priest alone, once a year, not without blood, which he offers for himself and for the unintentional sins of the people, this signifying from the Holy Spirit, the way into the holy things is not yet to be made known while the first tabernacle still remains. Which is a figure for the present time …"** (9:6-9).

The first part of the tabernacle seems to represent the church on earth, while the second part (the Holy of holies) seems to represent the church in heaven or the heavenly Jerusalem. The high priest alone was allowed in the second part of the tabernacle, the most holy place or Holy of holies, and only once a year. The author says that signifies the way into the holy things of heaven (the new Jerusalem) is not yet to be made known while the church remains on earth. We know the way of salvation and eternal life, which is Jesus Christ, but we cannot know the way into the new Jerusalem until the time for the marriage of the Lamb after the great judgment. The way will be revealed to us then.

Continuing about the tabernacle, he said, **"Which is a figure for the present time, according to which both gifts and sacrifices are offered that are not able to make the man officiating fully perfect in respect to conscience, only in foods and drinks and various washings: carnal ordinances imposed until a time of reformation"** (9:9-10). The routine gifts and sacrifices of the tabernacle were commanded by the law of Moses, but were never intended to be permanent. Indeed, even modern Jews do not make any such sacrifices. They were **"imposed until a time of reformation."** And that time of reformation was when God gave his new covenant through Jesus Christ, who was the ultimate sacrifice requiring no more.

Christ is the high priest of God's new covenant, and the author explains how much better that is for us: **"But Christ, having arrived a high priest of the good things that are coming, through the greater and more perfect tabernacle not made with hands, that is, not of this creation, and not through the blood of goats and calves, but through his own blood, he entered in once into the Holy things, having found eternal redemption. For if the blood of bulls and goats, and the ashes of a heifer, sprinkling those who were defiled, sanctifies for the purification of the flesh, how much more the blood of Christ, who, through the eternal Spirit, offered himself unblemished to God, will cleanse your conscience from dead works in order to serve a living God?"** (9:11-14).

The law of Moses required shedding the blood of animals continually for redemption of sins. However, the shed blood of the unblemished Christ brought eternal redemption, thus ending the necessity of animal sacrifices. His blood, through faith in him, will cleanse our conscience from dead works to serve the living God. His blood does not atone for the sins of all mankind, but only for those who choose to belong to him. And his blood cleanses our conscience through our living faith in him, a faith that leads us from dead works to obedient service to God.

Next the author says, **"And because of this he is mediator of a new covenant, so that a death having occurred for the redemption of the transgressions against the first covenant, those who are called might take the promise of the eternal inheritance"** (9:15). This book seems to have been written primarily for the Jews, because so much of it is about the law of Moses. That is why it is called Hebrews. Therefore, the reference to the first covenant in the above passage is obviously about the law of Moses. And the death of Christ brought eternal redemption for the sins of all who believe in him—the called—so they can take the promise of the eternal inheritance, life in heaven with God.

Shedding of blood

Then the author uses the word covenant to mean a will: **"For where a covenant is, a necessity is to present the death of the man who made the covenant. For a covenant is effective with the dead, since it is never enforced while the man who made the covenant lives"** (9:16-17). Changing the word covenant to will, the passage would read, "For where a will is, a necessity is to present the death of the man who made the will. For a will is effective with the dead, since it is never enforced while the man who made the will lives." A will is a special type of covenant, and the author is showing how the new covenant of God was like a will. For the inheritance of salvation and eternal life could never have been given without the death of Christ (his body of flesh) by whom the will was made for us. His death earned him the right to redeem all who belong to him, and award us the inheritance of eternal life. It is another of many evidences the author is giving to show how God made a new covenant, with Christ as the high priest.

Continuing with his comparison of the old and new covenants, the author said, **"Whereupon neither has the first been dedicated without blood. For of every commandment according to law that was spoken by Moses to all the people, after taking the blood of the calves and goats, with water and scarlet wool and hyssop, he sprinkled both the book itself and all the people, saying, This is the blood of the covenant that God made for you. And likewise he sprinkled with the blood both the tabernacle and all the vessels of the service. And almost all things, according to the law, are cleansed with blood, and remission does not occur without bloodshed"** (9:18-22). Animal sacrifices were a very large part of the law of Moses. God burdened them with so many because they were so rebellious. The author says blood was used for cleansing, and perhaps because they were so rebellious they needed a lot of cleansing. The law even required them to use blood to cleanse the material objects associated with the tabernacle. Of course, such cleansing with blood was not literal but figurative. It was done by sprinkling or sometimes by touching with a finger.

The author also said that remission (of sins) does not occur without bloodshed. This extremely permissive generation of Americans cannot understand why sin should be punished so harshly. It is quite possible one reason God created this world with its potential for sin was to demonstrate how destructive sin is so that we can learn to hate it the way he does. He is tolerating sin in this world so that we can learn how evil sin is, and so he can test our souls to see whether we love sin or hate it.

With perfect justice God has condemned every soul that commits a sin. However, with perfect justice Jesus earned the right to redeem from condemnation all who believe in him. Therefore, with perfect justice God can condemn his incorrigible enemies while forgiving his allies, namely, all who belong to his Son Jesus Christ. If you love righteousness, then be not grieved that sin brings the death penalty. It ensures full bondage and punishment for God's enemies, for they are the source of untold suffering and misery. We grieve because we too have sinned and created harm in the past, but we can also rejoice

when we repent because Christ redeemed us from condemnation, and our beloved God and Father has adopted us for his own.

Next the author says, **"Indeed therefore, a necessity was for the models of the things in the heavens themselves to be cleansed with these, but the heavenly things with better sacrifices than these. For the Christ entered not into a holy place made with hands, representative of the true, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us. And not so that he might offer himself often, as the high priest enters into the Holy things each year with blood by another, since it would be necessary for him to suffer often, from the foundation of the world. But now once, at the end of the ages, he was made known for an annulment of sin by the sacrifice of himself. And inasmuch as it is reserved to men once to die, and after this, judgment, so also the Christ, having been offered once in order to take up the sins of many, will appear a second time, independent of sin, to those waiting for him for salvation"** (9:23-28).

The most holy place of the tabernacle represented heaven. For that was where Jehovah was said to dwell among his people. His covenant of righteousness (the ten commandments) was there, and it was guarded by statues of cherubim not real ones. Compared with heaven it was, of course, a very primitive representation. Nevertheless, it was something tangible for his people to see in their midst. Nobody but the high priest was ever allowed to see inside of it, but he could testify and describe it for them. Notice again the author explained how the one time sacrifice of Christ annulled sin for all who belong to him. When he said the end of the ages, he was referring to the various ages before the coming of Christ. He also said men die once and after that is the judgment. There is no reincarnation as taught by Hinduism and other false religions.

Again the author explains how the good news of Christ is superior to the law of Moses: **"For the law having a shadow of the good things that are coming, not the same substance of the events, with the same sacrifices that are offered continually each year, they are never able to fully perfect those who are approaching. Otherwise would they not have ceased being offered, because of those who worship, once having been cleansed, to have no further conscience of sins? But in them is a reminder of sins each year. For it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins"** (10:1-4). There are many good things in the law of Moses, but as the author said, the law had only a shadow of the good things brought by Christ. The sacrifices for forgiveness of sins had to be made continuously, because they could never fully perfect those who offered them. For once having been perfectly cleansed their conscience would have nothing against them.

That will be our state of mind after our salvation in heaven. Our conscience will have nothing against us, because of our redemption by Jesus Christ. However, our salvation is not absolutely guaranteed before the judgment, because until then we can always fall from grace and be lost, as even the author of Hebrews taught when he said, **"For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and who tasted of the heavenly gift, and who became partakers of the Holy Spirit, and who tasted the good word of God and**

the powers of the coming age, and who fell away, to restore again to repentance, crucifying to themselves the Son of God, and disgracing him publicly. For the soil that has drunk the rain often coming upon it, and bringing forth vegetation useful for those by whom also it is cultivated, partakes of a blessing from God. But producing thorns and thistles it is unfit and near a curse, the end of which is for burning" (6:4-8).

If men who were found worthy to taste of the heavenly gift, and to become partakers of the Holy Spirit, and to taste the good word of God and the powers of the coming age, if they could fall away and suffer eternal punishment, do you think you will be spared if you persist in sin—any sin? Do not be misled by the very popular teaching that says otherwise, for Jesus said, **"… broad is the way, that leads to destruction, and many are they who enter through it"** (Matthew 7:13).

Notice the author said the blood of bulls and goats cannot take away sins. The kind of forgiveness given by God for the animal sacrifices of the law of Moses was a limited earthly forgiveness; it kept them from being cut off from his people. It did not spare them from death, which we all suffer. Nor did it spare them from eternal condemnation; only the blood of Christ is able to do that. And his redemption was not just for those who lived after him, but for all those before him as well. It is retroactive for all whom God judges worthy of receiving the gift of his grace of eternal salvation; namely, those who loved the laws of God's righteousness and hated sin, and lived accordingly.

Next the author said, **"Therefore when he comes into the world, he says, Sacrifice and offering thou did not desire, but thou prepared for me a body. In whole burnt offerings, and for sin thou were not pleased. Then I said, Lo, I come (in the volume of a book it is written about me) to do thy will, O God, saying above, Sacrifice and offering and whole burnt offerings and for sin thou did not desire, nor were thou pleased with things that are offered according to the law. Then he said, Lo, I come to do thy will, O God. He takes away the first, so that he may establish the second. By which will we are sanctified through the one time offering of the body of Jesus Christ"** (10:5-10).

That passage begins with a quotation from Psalm 40, which says, **"Sacrifice and offering thou did not desire, but a body thou have prepared for me. Whole burnt offering and sacrifice for sin thou did not require. Then I said, Lo, I have come. In the volume of a book it is written of me. I delight to do thy will, O my God. Yea, thy law is within my heart"** (Psalm 40:6-8). The Old Testament was written in Hebrew. The New Testament was written in Greek. Therefore, the words differ slightly, but the meaning is the same.

Those words say that what God really wants is not animal sacrifices or other such offerings, but ourselves in obedience to his righteousness. That sentiment is expressed many times in the Bible. Here is another example from the prophet Isaiah: **"What to me is the multitude of your sacrifices? says Jehovah. I have had enough of the burnt offerings of rams, and the fat of fed beasts. And I do not delight in the blood of bullocks or of**

lambs or of he-goats. When ye come to appear before me, who has required this at your hand—to trample my courts? Bring no more vain oblations. Incense is an abomination to me. New moon and sabbath, the calling of assemblies—I cannot bear iniquity and the solemn meeting. Your new moons and your appointed feasts my soul hates. They are a trouble to me. I am weary of bearing them. And when ye spread forth your hands, I will hide my eyes from you. Yea, when ye make many prayers, I will not hear; your hands are full of blood. Wash you, make you clean, put away the evil of your doings from before my eyes. Cease to do evil. Learn to do good. Seek justice, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow" (Isaiah 1:11-17).

Next the author said, **"And indeed every priest stands daily serving and offering the same sacrifices often, which can never take away sins. But this man, having offered one sacrifice on behalf of sins forever, sat down at the right hand of God, waiting henceforth until his enemies are placed a footstool of his feet. For by one offering he has fully perfected forever those being sanctified"** (10:11-14). Animal sacrifices can never take away sins, because they must be done over and over again. In contrast, the perfect sacrifice of Jesus redeemed us from all sin—past, present, and future—thereby ending the need to make further sacrifices.

Grace and Chastening

Remember however, the grace of his redemption is only for those who belong to him. And those who genuinely belong to him no longer live sinfully. For Paul said, **"What will we say then? We continue in sin so that grace may abound? How will we who died to sin, still live in it? Or are ye ignorant that as many as were immersed into Christ Jesus were immersed into his death? We were buried therefore with him through the immersion into death, so that as Christ was raised up from the dead through the glory of the Father, so also we may walk in newness of life"** (Romans 6:2-4).

The author of Hebrews said further, **"And the Holy Spirit also testifies to us, after indeed foretelling, This is the covenant that I will ordain with them after those days, says the Lord, giving my laws on their hearts, and on their minds I will write them, and, Their sins and their lawlessness I will, no, not further remember. Now where there is remission of these, there is no more offering for sin"** (10:15-18). The author is here showing how Jeremiah prophesied of the new covenant of Jesus Christ. And part of the new covenant is that the Lord will no longer remember our sins. That means we cannot be sinning, as John said: **"Every man who has been begotten of God is not doing sin, because his seed abides in him, and he cannot be sinning, because he has been begotten of God"** (First John 3:9).

Now beware of misinterpreting those passages. As disciples of Christ we certainly can offend God, but such offenses are not reckoned as sins. For Paul applied these word of David to us: **"Blessed is a man to whom the Lord does, no, not impute sin"** (Romans 4:8). Our occasional offenses against God are no more reckoned as sins than are the occasional of-

fenses of a little child against his father reckoned as crimes. They are not crimes because fathers do not judge their children by legal systems.

When we as children of God under grace offend him he will chasten us but he will not condemn us as he does all others who sin against him. For the author says farther on, **"And have ye forgotten the exhortation that reasons with you as with sons, My son, do not disparage the chastening of the Lord, nor become disheartened when punished by him? For whom the Lord loves he chastens. And he whips every son whom he receives. Because of chastening ye endure; God is treating you as with sons, for what son is there whom a father does not chasten?"** (12:5-7). However, if we do not respond appropriately to his chastening, this proverb will apply to us: **"He who, being often reproved, hardens his neck shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy"** (Proverbs 29:1). If we forsake Christ by continuing to offend God, he will disown us and will impute our sins against us. Consequently, we would be lost like the rest of the world.

Words of Encouragement and Warning

After that the author wrote these words of encouragement for us: **"Having therefore, brothers, boldness for entrance into the holy things by the blood of Jesus, which he inaugurated for us, a new and living way through the curtain, that is, his flesh, and a great priest over the house of God, let us approach with a true heart in full assurance of faith, our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our body washed in pure water. Let us hold firm the affirmation of the hope unwavering, for he who promised is faithful"** (10:19-23). The "holy things" is a reference to what was in the tabernacle, and the curtain is a reference to the covering at its entrance. The tabernacle (and later the temple that replaced it) was called the house of God. His house is now the church, meaning his disciples not a building. For Paul said to Timothy, **"I write to thee ... that thou may know how it is necessary to live in a house of God, which is a congregation of the living God, the pillar and foundation of the truth"** (First Timothy 3:14-15).

After a few more words to encourage us to live righteously, the author gave this warning: **"For when we sin willfully after taking the knowledge of the truth, there remains no more a sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful expectation of judgment and of fire, a fervor that is going to devour the opposition. Any man who has disregarded the law of Moses dies without mercies from two or three witnesses. By how much worse punishment do ye think he will deserve who has trampled the Son of God, and who considered profane the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified, and who treated the Spirit of grace contemptuously? For we know him who said, Vengeance is for me, I will repay, says the Lord. And again, The Lord will judge his people. It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God"** (10:26-31).

Those are very strong words of warning to disciples of Christ against continuing in sin, with an example from the law of Moses. He said any man who disregarded the law of Moses received the death penalty. However, not every willful violation of that law was a capital offense. What he seems to have meant by disregarding the law was continual disobedience.

There is a passage in the law of Moses that indicates chronic lawbreakers were to receive the death penalty. It says, **"But the soul that does anything with a high hand, whether he be home-born or a sojourner, the same blasphemes Jehovah, and that soul shall be cut off from among his people"** (Numbers 15:30). The author of Hebrews was probably referring to chronic sinners, men unfit to be children of God. And just as young children can develop from relative innocence to great guilt as they age, so too can Christians. Therefore, dear brother, heed what Peter said: **"Be sober, be vigilant. Your opponent the devil, as a roaring lion, walks about seeking whom to devour"** (First Peter 5:8).

After listing many examples from the Old Testament of souls who persevered in righteousness by faith, the author encouraged us to also persevere. Then he told how God gave the ten commandments: **"For ye have not come to a mountain being felt, and which burned with fire, and to darkness, and gloom, and a tempest, and a sound of a trumpet, and a voice of words, of which those who heard begged that a word not be added to them. For they did not bear that which was commanded, if even a beast should touch the mountain, it shall be stoned. And so fearful was that which was made visible, that Moses said, I am terrified and trembling"** (12:18-21).

God spoke the ten commandments directly from the mountain. His voice was so powerful that even Moses was terrified and trembled. Also notice how that passage reveals their resistance to the strictness of God. The author says they did not bear the commandment that even a beast be stoned if it touched the mountain. A morally weak people hate strong punishment for guilt. Therefore, pagan America is becoming more lawless because misdeeds are punished so lightly. The people want it that way. Like the unfaithful sons of Israel in the wilderness, sinners cannot endure the kind of justice God demands.

The author then describes the joy of our inheritance in heaven: **"But ye have come to mount Zion, and to the city of a living God, a heavenly Jerusalem, and to myriads of agents, to a festal gathering and assembly of firstborn sons who were enrolled in the heavens, and to God, a Judge of all, and to spirits of righteous men who were made fully perfect, and to Jesus a mediator of a new covenant, and to blood of sprinkling that speaks better than Abel"** (12:22-24). During the Old Testament period the firstborn son was chosen above all the others for leadership, and he was given a double inheritance. As disciples of Christ we will be joint heirs with him (see Romans 8:17), and will reign in heaven with him (see Revelation 3:21). We will, therefore, be like firstborn sons of God in heaven, although subject to Christ his only begotten Son and our mediator. Abel was the first example of faith that the author mentioned earlier. The offering Abel gave was also the first mentioned in the Bible of an animal sacrifice, and it was approved by God instead of the offering of his brother Cain which was of the fruit of the ground.

The author then gave yet another warning: **"Watch, that ye not refuse him who speaks. For if those men did not escape, having refused him who spoke a divine message on earth, much more we, those who turn away from him from the heavens, whose voice then shook the earth"** (12:25-26). We can read in the Old Testament about how God punished the sons of Israel who rebelled against his words. Those examples illustrate the inev-

itable punishment to expect for all who turn away from Christ, he who came from heaven itself.

After that he quoted a prophecy from the book of Haggai (2:6): **"But now he has promised, saying, Yet once, I shake not only the earth, but also the heaven. And the, Yet once, signifies the removal of the things being shaken—as of things that were made—so that the things not being shaken may remain. Therefore, receiving an immovable kingdom, we may have grace, through which we may serve God acceptably with reverence and awe. For our God is also a consuming fire"** (12:26-29). That prophecy appears to be about the end of the world, when both the earth and the heavens will be removed. And what will remain is the heaven of the spiritual world, within which is the immovable kingdom we will inherit. Therefore, we must serve God acceptably, meaning according to his commandments, with reverence and awe.

And he gave another warning when he said that God was also a consuming fire. Remember what the author said earlier: **"For when we sin willfully after taking the knowledge of the truth, there remains no more a sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful expectation of judgment and of fire, a fervor that is going to devour the opposition"** (10:26-27). God is a consuming fire toward those who persistently oppose him. Those who hate him and oppose him scoff at such warnings. Be not misled by such blind fools, for when this life is over it will be too late to escape.

Be not like the rich man in Jesus' parable: **"And it came to pass for the poor man** [Lazarus] **to die and be carried by the agents to Abraham's bosom. And the rich man also died and was buried. And having lifted up his eyes in Hades, being in torments, he sees Abraham from afar and Lazarus by his bosom. And having cried out, he said, Father Abraham, be merciful to me, and send Lazarus, so that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue, because I am in agony in this flame. But Abraham said, Child, remember that thou in thy lifetime received thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things. But now here he is comforted and thou are in agony. And besides all these things, between us and you a great chasm is fixed, so that those here who want to cross over to you are not able, nor may those go across from there to us.**

"And he said, I beg thee therefore, father, that thou would send him to my father's house, for I have five brothers, that he may testify to them, lest they also come into this place of torment. But Abraham says to him, They have Moses and the prophets [the Bible]**. Let them hear them. And he said, No, father Abraham, but if some man would go to them from the dead they will repent. And he said to him, If they do not listen to Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded if some man would rise from the dead"** (Luke 16:22-31). The rich man wanted his brothers warned. That parable was given to warn all of us.

The author of Hebrews gave a few other instructions about righteousness, after which he used one final example from the law: **"We have an altar from which they have no right to eat, those officiating at the tabernacle. For of the beasts whose blood is brought into the holy things for sin by the high priest, the bodies of these are burned outside the**

camp. Therefore Jesus also, so that he might sanctify the people through his own blood, suffered outside the gate. Let us therefore go forth to him outside the camp, bearing his reproach. For here we have no enduring city, but we seek that which is coming. Through him therefore, let us offer up a sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, fruit of lips acknowledging his name" (13:10-15).

The priests of the law of Moses were given the duty of burning the offerings on the altar, and they had the right to eat of most of those animals. However, the priests of the law have no rights in heaven. All human rights there are reserved for the disciples of Christ, which is all the more reason we should avail ourselves of that marvelous opportunity while it is given.

The blood of a bullock and of a goat was brought into the most holy place on the day of atonement, and their bodies were burned outside the camp. They were a sin offering, and the author said that symbolized the sin offering of Jesus, who suffered "outside the gate." Inside the gate seems to represent the kingdom of heaven, and the outside of it represents our sinful world. It was necessary for the Son of God to suffer outside of heaven as an offering to atone for our sins and redeem us. Therefore, as his disciples, while we are in the world we should join him, sharing his reproach by the world, for here we have no enduring city.

We are in the world, but we are not of the world. For Jesus said of his disciples, **"They are not of the world just as I am not of the world"** (John 17:16). And when the author of Hebrews earlier listed examples of men of great faith, he said, **"All these died in faith, not having taken the promises, but who saw and greeted them from afar, and who confessed that they were foreigners and sojourners on the earth. For those who say such things show that they are seeking a fatherland"** (11:13-14). Therefore, we must continually praise God through Christ because of the great hope he has given us.

Part 3:10

LAW IN OTHER NEW TESTAMENT BOOKS

LAW IN EPHESIANS

In this book Paul speaks of the law as a dividing wall of partition which separated the sons of Israel from the Gentiles. Writing to the Gentile Christians at Ephesus, he said, **"But now in Christ Jesus ye, being formerly far off, became near in the blood of the Christ. For he is our peace, who made both one, and broke down the dividing wall of partition, having abolished in his flesh the enmity—the law of the commandments in ordinances—so that he might create in himself the two into one new man, making peace, and might reconcile them both in one body to God through the cross, having slain the enmity by it"** (2:13-16).

Jesus abolished the law as a means of becoming righteous before God. Paul called it the enmity, because sin used the law as a means to slay us. Remember, Paul said, **"The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law"** (First Corinthians 15:56). The law was the enmity not because it was bad, but because it was used by sin to slay us. However, Christ has redeemed us from bondage to law.

Thus, there is no longer a distinction in the sight of God between the sons of Israel and Gentiles. We are all created in Christ into one new man. Denominationalism is popular but it is not an authentic part of the true Church of Christ. Indeed, Paul rebuked the Corinthians for creating factions within the church (see First Corinthians 1-3). That is another reason why Jewish Christians who insist on clinging to the laws of Moses are in error. They attempt to rebuild the wall of partition that Christ abolished. The very process of separating themselves from Gentiles in the practice of their religion is the wall that Christ broke down.

LAW IN PHILIPPIANS

In this letter to the Philippians Paul gave a strong warning about the Jews who were boasting of the law. He said, **"Beware of the dogs, beware of the evil workmen, beware of the excision. For we are the circumcision, men who worship in spirit to God, and who boast in Christ Jesus, and not being confident in flesh"** (3:2-3). He was so disgusted with such divisive men that he called them dogs and evil workmen.

Then he told how he too could have confidence in his worldly life. He said, **"Although (I having confidence also in flesh) if any other man seems to be confident in the flesh, I more: in circumcision the eighth day, of the race of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; regarding law, a Pharisee; regarding zeal, persecuting the church; regarding the righteousness in law, having become blameless"** (3:4-6).

After describing those attributes and achievements of his former life he told how he forsook everything for Christ: **"But whatever was gain to me, these things I regarded loss because of the Christ. But indeed therefore I even consider all things to be loss because of things surpassing, of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, because of whom I**

suffered the loss of all things, and consider them to be rubbish, so that I may gain Christ, and be found in him, not having my righteousness, that from law, but that through Christ's faith—the righteousness from God based on faith—to know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the participation of his sufferings, being conformed to his death, if somehow I might attain to the resurrection of the dead" (3:7-11). No doubt those Jews who did not accept Jesus believed Paul had wasted his life by forsaking all those advantages to become a preacher for that hated new religion. Little did they know how much he would achieve and what a great name he has become in the world. But then Paul did not know either; it was his faith in Christ and love for him that motivated him so strongly.

Notice how he contrasted the righteousness based upon law with the righteousness based on faith. When describing his achievements he said he became blameless regarding the righteousness in law, but that did not mean he had never sinned. It meant he had reached the point where he never broke any of the laws of Moses. That was indeed a very rare achievement, but he had no confidence is his own righteousness from law. His confidence was in Christ and his righteousness. And with his knowledge of him and the power of Christ's resurrection, Paul chose to participate in his sufferings and conform to his death so that he could have the hope of attaining the resurrection of the dead.

To participate in Christ's sufferings and conform to his death can be understood by the following passage in Romans: **"We were buried therefore with him through the immersion into death, so that as Christ was raised up from the dead through the glory of the Father, so also we may walk in newness of life. For if we have become co-planted in the likeness of his death, then we will also be of the resurrection. Knowing this, that our old man was crucified with him, so that the body of sin might be inactivated, no longer to enslave us to sin. For he who has died has been made righteous away from sin. And if we died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him"** (Romans 6:4-8).

Law in First Timothy

In this book Paul summarized his teachings about the law when he said, **"But the end of the commandment is love out of a pure heart, and a good conscience, and non-hypocritical faith. From which some having swerved have turned aside to empty talk, desiring to be law teachers, understanding neither what they say, nor about what they confidently assert"** (1:5-7). The essence of the law of God commands us to have a pure heart, a good conscience, non-hypocritical faith, and to love others. And even though the law of Moses is now obsolete, the good news of Christ contains the essence of it, which will always remain in force. Paul rebuked those who were apparently attempting to impose legalism upon Christians. They wanted to be law teachers, but they were ignorant and proud men.

Often ignorant and arrogant men with strong self-confidence are very persuasive because they give people the impression they know what they are doing. History tells of the tragic consequences of following such men. Hitler was supremely self-confident, even while his

world was crashing down upon him because of his foolishness. He saw his problems as always caused by others. Mao Tse-tung caused enormous harm, grief, and death to the Chinese people because of his foolishness. Yet he too remained supremely confident. History is filled with many examples. Beware of proud men with strong self-confidence.

Paul went on to say, **"But we know that the law is good, if any man uses it lawfully, knowing this, that law is not laid down for righteous men, but for the lawless and rebellious, for the irreverent and sinful, for the impious and profane, for father killers and mother killers, for man killers, for fornicators, for homosexuals, for kidnappers, for liars, for perjurers, and if there is any other thing contrary to the sound doctrine according to the good news of the glory of the blessed God, of which I was entrusted"** (1:8-11).

The law is good because it contains knowledge about right and wrong, and that is essential for us all. The law is good when it is used for righteousness and not misused to promote injustice and evil. Crooked lawyers are shrewd manipulators of law, using it legally but unlawfully. For when law is used to defeat justice that is using it unlawfully, which is now a common practice in pagan America.

The entire Bible teaches us that God wants us to live righteously, with love for our neighbors and a pure heart and a good conscience. And doing any of those sinful things Paul listed above, or any like them, is contrary to the sound doctrine of the good news of God. I grieve when I see how things such as rebelliousness, irreverence, and fornication are not only tolerated, but even glorified by this most lawless generation of Americans. Therefore, I work to help enlighten all who love the laws of God's righteousness, but are blinded by the seductive lies of the devil and his disciples.

LAW IN JAMES

After saying we should be doers of the word, and not hearers only, James said, **"But he who stooped to look into the perfect law, the one of liberty, and who remained, this man, who did not become a forgetful hearer but a doer of work, this man will be blessed in his doing"** (1:25). The perfect law, the one of liberty, is not a legal system, but a way of life governed by God's laws of righteousness, which we choose to obey because of our love for him and our fellow man. It is a perfect law because it never fails to produce righteousness and justice. It is also a law of liberty because it gives the maximum potential for creativity and productivity, unhampered by the restraints of rules and regulations. If we have the Spirit of Christ within us there is no need to put limits upon how we use our knowledge and understanding; they will always be used for good and not evil. For Paul said, **"Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty"** (Second Corinthians 3:17). Liberty is given because there is no need for external restraints.

James said the perfect law was the law of liberty, but he also spoke of the royal law, when he said, **"If ye indeed fulfill the royal law according to the scripture, Thou shall love thy neighbor as thyself, ye do well. But if ye respect personages, ye work sin, being convicted by the law as transgressors. For whoever keeps the whole law, and stumbles**

on one, he has become guilty of all. For he who said thou shall not commit adultery, also said thou shall not murder. Now if thou will not commit adultery, but murder, thou have become a transgressor of law. So speak ye, and so do ye, as men who are to be judged by a law of liberty" (2:8-12).

The word royal means magnificent, splendid, majestic, of the highest rank. And to love our neighbors as ourselves is the royal law of God. Jesus said that loving our neighbors as ourselves was the second greatest of the laws of Moses. That law will always be in effect, because it is one of the universal laws of righteousness. It is second only to the supreme command, which Jesus said was, **"Thou shall love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart, and with thy whole soul, and with thy whole mind"** (Matthew 22:37). Paul wrote further about the royal law to love our neighbors, when he said, **"... he who loves the other has fulfilled law. For this, Thou shall not commit adultery, Thou shall not murder, Thou shall not steal, Thou shall not testify falsely, Thou shall not covet, and if there be any other commandment it is summarized in this saying, in, Thou shall love thy neighbor as thyself. Love works no evil to the neighbor. Therefore love is the fulfillment of law"** (Romans 13:8-10).

In the passage from James he condemned being partial, for that is against the royal law. Respect for personages is treating some people better than others without justification. That means those not so respected are treated unjustly, and that is certainly a violation of the law to love our neighbors as ourselves. For no man wants to be treated unjustly. Even criminals protest if they think they are being treated unjustly. The laws of racial segregation in the southern states of America were certainly against the royal law James wrote about. And it was a reproach to Christians there who supported those laws.

James also pointed out, as Paul did, that a single violation made a man a transgressor of the law. Therefore, respecting personages makes a man a transgressor of law. We disciples of Christ are not under a legal system. Nevertheless, we are under a law of liberty, and James said we will be judged by it. We will be judged by it in this life the way a father judges the behavior of his children, for praise or chastening, reward or punishment.

James next said, **"For the judgment is merciless to him who did no mercy. Mercy triumphs over judgment"** (2:13). Many persons quote the last part of that scripture as evidence we should always show mercy to the guilty. They conveniently ignore the first part of it, which says the merciless will be judged without mercy. The merciless deserve no mercy, and God will give them none. Therefore, why should we? Mercy for the merciless serves the devil and his purposes, not God and his righteousness.

James made another reference to law when he said, **"Speak not against each other, brothers. He who speaks against a brother and judges his brother, speaks against law and judges law. But if thou judge law, thou are not a doer of law, but a judge. There is one lawgiver who is able to save and to destroy, but thou, who are thou who judge the other man?"** (4:11-12). Remember, many words in the Bible have several meanings, and the word judge is one of them. James said above we were not to judge our brothers, but Paul said we were to judge our brothers: **"Dare any of you, having a matter against the other,**

go to law before the unrighteous and not before the sanctified? Or know ye not that the sanctified will judge the world? And if the world is judged by you, are ye unworthy of very small legal disputes? Know ye not that we will judge agents? Then why not mundane things? (First Corinthians 6:1-3). Paul and James were not contradicting each other. They were referring to different applications of judgment. There are many examples in the New Testament of Christians properly speaking against and rebuking the infractions of each other.

James was apparently referring to the very common practice of condemning somebody who has not had a proper hearing. For that is part of the process of law, whether secular law or the law of liberty that James said we Christians are to be judged by. When a Christian passes judgment on a brother outside of a proper hearing, then he speaks against law and judges it. Such a man is saying in effect that he is above the law; he is judging the law by saying it is not sufficient for him. Therefore, he will judge on his own. It is wrong both for individuals and for groups to judge improperly, outside of law. The Bible teaches us how to judge each other properly by the law of God. And that is what Jesus commanded: **"Judge not according to appearance, but judge righteous judgment"** (John 7:24). And James was warning not to judge and condemn beyond what is lawful. Judging outside of what is allowed (by secular law or by our law of liberty) is one of the most common of sins even by Christians. And the devil loves it, because he is the chief false accuser (see Revelation 12:10).

Law in First Peter

Peter's only reference to the law of Moses was about the priesthood. And he said that we as disciples of Christ are now the priesthood. He spoke of that when describing the new house of God, which is the spiritual house called the church, with Christ being the chief corner stone: **"Coming to whom, a living stone, rejected indeed by men, but with God chosen, precious, ye also, as living stones, are built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. It is therefore contained in the scripture, Behold, I lay in Zion a chief corner stone, chosen, precious. And he who believes in him will, no, not be shamed.**

"To you therefore who believe is the preciousness, but for men who disobey, A stone that the builders rejected, this became the head of the corner, and, A stone of stumbling and a rock of offense, men who stumble at the word, being disobedient, for which also they were set. But ye are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for an acquired possession, so that ye might broadly proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. Men formerly not a people, but now are a people of God. Men who had not obtained mercy, but who now have obtained mercy" (2:4-10).

Law in Revelation

The only reference to the law of Moses in Revelation is also about the priesthood The apostle John wrote that book, and his first reference to Christians as priests is at the very beginning. He said, **"John, to the seven congregations in Asia: Grace to you and peace from**

God, who is and who was and who is coming, and from the seven Spirits that are before his throne, and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn of the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth. To him who loves us and washed us from our sins by his blood and made us a kingdom, priests to his God and Father, to him is the glory and the dominion into the ages of the ages. Truly" (1:4-6).

Farther on he spoke again of our being priests: **"And they sing a new song, saying, Thou are worthy to take the book and to open the seals of it, because thou were killed and purchased us from God by thy blood, out of every tribe, and tongue, and people, and nation. And thou made them kings and priests to our God, and they will reign over the earth"** (Revelation 5:9-10). And near the end of the book he said, **"Blessed and holy is he who has part in the first resurrection. On these the second death has no power, but they will be priests of God and of the Christ, and will reign with him a thousand years"** (20:6).

PART FOUR:
LAW AFTER CHRIST

Part 4:1

REDEEMED BY CHRIST

THE SPIRITUAL WAR

The reason why our world has so much evil is because there is so much sin and rebellion against God who made it. Indeed, the Bible says it is all part of a great super-cosmic war against him. The instigator of that war is the monster dragon of the spirit world called the Devil and Satan. And the major arena in that war is the conflict for the minds and hearts of men. That means God and the devil are fighting for our loyalty, and there can be no neutrality. For Jesus said, **"He who is not with me is against me, and he who does not gather with me scatters"** (Matthew 12:30). That means if you are not with God then you are with the devil, whether you make that choice consciously or not.

The struggle for our minds and hearts is primarily a conflict of words and ideas. However, since our thoughts control our behavior, what happens in that conflict affects how we live. And when men choose the devil instead of God they live unrighteously, casting off restraint and indulging their lusts with sinful pleasures. The Bible says **"... the wages of sin is death ..."** (Romans 6:23), but most men do not believe it because the devil has deceived them. Indeed, deceit seems to be his major weapon.

Jesus mentioned that spiritual warfare when he said, **"Think not that I came to spread peace on the earth. I came not to spread peace, but a sword. For I came to divide a man against his father, and a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law. And a man's foes, are those of his own household"** (Matthew 10:34-36). The sword that Jesus said he came to spread is the sword of the Spirit, which Paul said was the word of God (see Ephesians 6:17). The word of God is our major weapon in the war against God's enemies because it is filled with truth.

As disciples of Christ we are soldiers in God's war with his enemies. As Paul said about himself, **"I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith"** (Second Timothy 4:7). He said more about that war with these words: **"For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty in God for the demolition of strongholds, casting down imaginations, and every high thing exalted against the knowledge of God, and bringing every thought captive into the obedience of the Christ, and having in readiness to avenge every disobedience, whenever your obedience is fulfilled"** (Second Corinthians 10:4-6).

God could defeat the devil quickly if he so desired. However, this world is a place of testing, where men have the opportunity to become eternal sons of God. He is selecting souls for the new heaven and earth to come. Jesus gave many parables to illustrate that lesson. Here is one of them: **"He set forth another parable to them, saying, The kingdom of the heavens is compared to a man sowing good seed in his field. But while the men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares in the midst of the wheat, and went away. And when the blade sprouted and produced fruit, then the tares also appeared. But the bondmen of**

the house-ruler having come, they said to him, Sir, did thou not sow good seed in thy field? From where then does it have tares? And he said to them, A hostile man did this. And the bondmen said to him, Do thou desire therefore, after going, we would gather them up? But he said, No, lest while gathering up the tares, ye uproot the wheat together with them. Allow both to grow together until the harvest. And at the time of the harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather up first the tares, and bind them in bundles in order to burn them, but gather the wheat into my barn. ...

"Then having sent the multitudes away, Jesus came into the house. And his disciples came to him, saying, Explain to us the parable of the tares of the field. And having answered, he said to them, He who sows the good seed is the Son of man, and the field is the world, and the good seed, these are the sons of the kingdom, but the tares are the sons of evil. And the enemy who sowed them is the devil, and the harvest is the end of the age, and the reapers are agents. As therefore the tares are gathered up and burned in fire, so it will be at the end of this age. The Son of man will send forth his agents, and they will gather out of his kingdom all the stumbling-blocks, and those doing lawlessness, and will cast them into the furnace of fire. There will be the weeping and the gnashing of teeth. Then the righteous will shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears to hear, let him hear" (Matthew 13:24-43).

Therefore, God is patiently waiting, giving men the freedom to choose him or the devil. Paul spoke of that with these words: **"And if God, wanting to show his wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much longsuffering vessels of wrath prepared for destruction, even that he might make known the wealth of his glory upon vessels of mercy, which he previously prepared for glory, namely us whom he called, not only from Jews but also from Gentiles"** (Romans 9:22-24).

It is sad but true that most men have joined sides with the devil because they love the pleasures of sin more than the benefits of righteousness. Their hearts are blind; they are spiritually myopic. In the great majority of persons their alliance with the devil is unconscious. Nevertheless, their sinfulness supports him by contributing to the war against God. Remember these things if you want to have a better understanding about the world and our lives in it. Do not side with the devil. Why should you put your hope in the vanity and injustice of this life only? At its best life on earth is short, full of troubles, and it always ends in death. Be wise and trust God who made you!

Condemnation and Salvation

Contrary to the popular myth about the devil, he is not a two-horned creature with a pointy-tail that reigns in hell. When he is finally cast into hell he will be a slave there like all other condemned souls. But until then he is a powerful spiritual force that actively pervades the world like the air around us. Indeed Paul said he was **"the ruler of the power of the air, the spirit that now works in the sons of disobedience"** (Ephesians 2:2). He works in their hearts because they have rejected God and his righteousness. God sent his Son into the world to destroy the works of the devil. For John said, **"He who is doing sin is of the**

devil, because the devil sinned from the beginning. The Son of God was made known for this, so that he might destroy the works of the devil" (First John 3:8).

God also sent his Son into the world to save the souls of those who believe in him: **"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, so that every man who believes in him would not perish, but have eternal life"** (John 3:16). Without the salvation of his Son we would all be condemned with the devil.

We would all be condemned because we all sin, and I will explain the reason why. All men are born subject to law: God's natural law and his moral law of righteousness. Sin is a violation of God's moral law, and the wages of sin is death. As a result of the sin of Adam all men are born with a corrupted body of sin, which means the body of every man eventually dies. It is corrupted because it has evil appetites and impulses that tempt our spirit to sin. Unlike our flesh, however, every man is born with a pure spirit. It is only when our spirit sins that it is condemned to die, which is a living death in hell. And because of the weakness of our spirit, in this body of flesh, we all eventually sin.

Thus, the spirit of every man is condemned to die because we are born into a world where we cannot avoid sinning. Paul spoke of that when he said, **"For God has confined all men in disobedience ..."** (Romans 11:32), and **"... scripture confined all things under sin"** (Galatians 3:21). Now although God has confined all men in disobedience under sin, he does not cause us to sin; it is a result of our own free will in our body of sin.

There are at least two reasons why God confined all men in disobedience under sin. One reason was to prove the moral and spiritual supremacy of his only begotten Son, Jesus Christ. For he alone of all men never sinned. He was thoroughly tempted and suffered to the point of a cruel death, but he remained obedient to God and never sinned. Hence, no man can boast or claim equality with him. As Paul said, **"For ye are saved by grace through faith, and this a gift of God, not from you, not from works, so that not any man may boast"** (Ephesians 2:8-9).

Another reason God confined all men in disobedience was to save the souls of those who believe in him: **"For God has confined all men in disobedience, so that he might be merciful to all."** (Romans 11:32). And that salvation is through faith in Christ: **"... scripture confined all things under sin, so that the promise from faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe"** (Galatians 3:21-22). That also means God's incorrigible enemies remain condemned, because they refuse to have faith in him.

And our salvation is not from works of law but by grace through faith. As Paul said, **"But now a righteousness of God has been manifested independent of law, being witnessed by the law and the prophets. And the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ is for all and upon all those who believe, for there is no distinction. For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God, being made righteous freely by his grace …"** (Romans 3:21-24). Salvation is only through faith in Jesus Christ. And it is a free gift from God for all men who believe, because all have fallen short of obedience to law. But remember, faith in Christ includes total commitment to God and his righteousness.

Paul went on to explain how the gift of God's grace was **"through the redemption in Christ Jesus, whom God set forth an expiatory sacrifice through faith in his blood, for proof of his justice, because of the passing over of the sins that have formerly occurred (in the forbearance of God), for proof of his justice at the present time, for him to be righteous, and who makes the man from Jesus' faith righteous"** (Romans 3:24-26). Those words are rich with meaning. They speak of the redemption in Christ Jesus, and they speak of the proof of God's justice.

The Justice of God

The expiatory sacrifice of Jesus not only enabled him to become our redeemer, but our redemption is proof of God's justice. The Bible says justice is part of the very foundation of God's throne. Speaking of him the psalmist said, **"Righteousness and justice are the foundation of thy throne"** (Psalm 89:14). That means his righteousness and his justice verify the reign of his supremacy. God cannot claim moral supremacy if he too acts unjustly.

Remember, part of justice is impartiality, and therefore God is impartial. As Paul said, **"For there is no partiality with God"** (Romans 2:11). The Jews thought God was partial to them. That is why when Peter was sent to convert the first Gentile, he said, **"In truth, I am overwhelmed that God is not partial"** (Acts 10:34). James also said we sin if we are partial: **"But if ye respect personages, ye work sin, being convicted by the law as transgressors"** (James 2:9). If God forgives us arbitrarily he must forgive everyone the same way, including the devil and his disciples, for God is impartial and does not respect personages. Therefore, he cannot show mercy to us arbitrarily and still apply his justice to all his enemies.

That is probably why the devil was constantly accusing us to God. For the Bible says that in heaven Satan continually accused us. That was reported by the apostle John in his description of things in heaven: **"And war developed in heaven: Michael and his agents to fight with the dragon. And the dragon and his agents fought. And he did not prevail, nor was a place found for him any more in heaven. And the great dragon was cast out, the ancient serpent, called the Devil and Satan, he who leads the whole world astray. He was cast out to the earth, and his agents were cast out with him.**

"And I heard a great voice in heaven, saying, Now it came to pass, the salvation, and the power, and the kingdom of our God, and the authority of his Christ. Because the accuser of our brothers was cast out, who accuses them before our God day and night. And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony. And they loved not their life to the point of death. Rejoice because of this, O heavens, and ye who dwell in them. Woe to the earth and the sea, because the devil has come down to you, having great wrath, knowing that he has little time" (Revelation 12:7-12).

Satan was condemned and cast out of heaven by the expiatory sacrifice of Jesus. Indeed, not long before his crucifixion Jesus prophesied to the multitude, **"Now is the judgment of this world. Now the ruler of this world will be cast out"** (John 12:31). Jesus' expiatory sac-

rifice was God's solution to the dilemma of impartially condemning the guilt of his enemies but redeeming the guilt of those who love him.

That God must be impartial may also be the reason why Satan was so eager to tempt Adam to sin. Satan must have known he would be severely punished if he did, but he tempted him anyway. You see, when Adam sinned it caused the condemnation of death for all mankind to come. For Paul said of Adam, **"… just as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin, so also death passed to all men, in that all sinned"** (Romans 5:12). Therefore, by causing Adam to sin that meant God could not cast Satan into hell without condemning all of God's children to go there as well, because we too sin. Otherwise God would be partial and violate justice. Consequently, our salvation and Satan's condemnation posed a dilemma for God, at least that may have been what the devil thought.

God's enemies always underestimate him. He knew from the beginning how he was going to save us and condemn his enemies (see Ephesians 3:7-11). Although he knew how he was going to save us from being condemned with the devil, he did not reveal the details of his great plan for our deliverance until the time actually came to carry it out, as Paul said in this passage: **"Now to him who is able to establish you according to my good news, and the preaching of Jesus Christ according to a revelation of the mystery that has been kept secret for eternal times, but that was now revealed, and by prophetic scriptures, according to a commandment of the eternal God that was made known to all the nations for obedience of faith, to the only wise God through Jesus Christ, to whom is the glory into the ages. Truly"** (Romans 16:25-27).

God only made subtle references in prophetic scriptures to his great plan for our redemption. For example, Isaiah spoke of the Redeemer coming to Zion (see Isaiah 59:20). There were many things God did not make clear in the Old Testament. Just as the Old Testament contains only subtle references to life after death, so too, it contains only subtle references to the Son of God. Here are two from the book of Isaiah: **"Thus says Jehovah, the King of Israel, and his Redeemer, Jehovah of hosts: I am the first, and I am the last, and besides me there is no God"** (44:6), and, **"Thus says Jehovah, the Redeemer of Israel, *and* his Holy One, to him whom man despises ..."** (49:7). His plan was clearly revealed only after the establishment of Christ's church, which happened after his ascension into heaven. Even his apostles were unaware of it before then.

Our Redemption

The solution to God's dilemma of how to impartially forgive those who believe in him, yet punish those who oppose him, was his son Jesus Christ. For the expiatory sacrifice of Jesus atoned for the sins of those who believe in him. Here is how it happened. Remember, God cannot violate justice, and guilt without condemnation violates justice. Therefore all who offend God must be condemned, whether they are his children or not, for God shows no partiality. Now God can forgive those who are condemned, removing their condemnation. But he must forgive impartially, otherwise he would not be just. Thus, guilt brings condemnation, and condemnation without punishment violates justice (unless the guilt is forgiven).

Now in the same way, condemnation and punishment without guilt also violates justice. You see, our Redeemer lived a perfectly sinless life. Thus, he did not deserve suffering and death. Yet, in obedience to his heavenly Father, Jesus served him unselfishly, doing good, even allowing himself to suffer many things including torture and a cruel death. God commanded him to endure condemnation and the punishment of a cruel death (by evil men) even though he was perfectly innocence.

Therefore, God rewarded him. Would it not be unjust to command perfect holiness to suffer without reward? Would it not be a great violation of justice if there were no compensation? Therefore, Jesus' suffering and death could not go without reward. Consequently, since God commanded Jesus to endure all his unjust suffering, and Jesus obeyed fully, then God owed Jesus compensation, for God is a God of justice. (Of course, all of us suffer unjustly from time to time. But since we are all guilty anyway, and whatever suffering we experience is never comparable to what we deserve for our guilt against God, then such unjust suffering deserves no reward. Nevertheless, God will reward us if we endure unjust suffering for his righteousness sake; although not because he owes it to us, but because of his loving grace.)

Now there is no way we humans can fully appreciate the value of a completely sinless life—absolute spiritual perfection. In God's sight, such a one is a priceless treasure. And so, because of Christ's perfect obedience, God gave him a perfect reward. He was made Lord of all, both in heaven (except, of course, the Father) and on earth. Moreover, all men who willingly sacrifice their lives here on earth to follow Jesus, and who accept his Lordship will be redeemed from condemnation. For you see, Jesus has already made atonement for our sins. His life of total obedient self-sacrifice was accepted by God to atone for our sins. It was part of God's compensation to him. That is one reason why Jesus is called the Lamb of God, because he was our atoning sacrifice. Our redemption from guilt and condemnation is not a matter of arbitrary forgiveness by God, it is an act of justice for Christ. God owes Jesus the right to redeem us from condemnation, because he atoned for our sins.

Thus, we were "bought back," or "freed from blame or debt" by the payment of Jesus' innocent blood on the cross. Therefore, Paul told his Christian brothers, **"... ye are not your own, for ye were bought with a price"** (First Corinthians 6:19-20). And in his vision of heaven John said he heard them singing a new song about Christ, saying **"… thou were killed and purchased us from God by thy blood, out of every tribe, and tongue, and people, and nation"** (Revelation 5:9).

Hence, the words of that holy prophet of God, Isaiah (who taught that God is our Redeemer) are now fulfilled. For he quoted God who said, **"I, even I, am he who blots out thy transgressions for my own sake, and I will not remember thy sins**" (Isaiah 43:25). Those words were fulfilled at the cross, when the innocent Messiah made the ultimate sacrifice in obedience to the Father's will in order to atone for our sins.

And so Paul could tell his Christian brothers, **"And you, being dead in transgressions and the uncircumcision of your flesh, you he made alive together with him, having forgiven us all the transgressions, having erased the handwriting against us in the regu-**

lations that were hostile to us, and he has taken it up from the midst, having nailed it to the cross. Having stripped the principal offices and the positions of authority, he exposed them openly, having triumphed over them by it" (Colossians 2:13-15).

By redeeming us, Jesus **"erased the handwriting against us in the regulations that were hostile to us."** The legalism of law is hostile to us because none of us have the spiritual strength to keep from violating it eventually, and that condemns us. Moreover, by redeeming us that way Jesus **"stripped the principal offices and the positions of authority"** and **"he exposed them openly, having triumphed over them by it."** For Satan and his mighty allies no longer have an excuse for their own guilt. He can no longer claim that sin is natural and inevitable. Consequently, God's great adversary was defeated and cast out of heaven. And it took a war to cast him out, even though he was condemned justly.

Paul also compared our condemnation through Adam with our justification through Christ: **"So then, as through an offense of one man was for condemnation for all men, so also through a righteousness of one man was for justification of life for all men. For as through the one man's disobedience the many were led sinful, so also through the obedience of the one man the many will be led righteous"** (Romans 5:18-19). The serpent in the garden of Eden tempted Eve to sin, and she tempted Adam. Thus Satan was able to bring about the condemnation of mankind. By the offense of the one man Adam sin came into the world, which has led all men to sin. And sin condemns every man to death. However, in like manner, the obedience of the one man Jesus Christ brought justification of life to all men.

All men have the opportunity for justification, but it will only be for those who have faith in him. And faith in him not only brings justification, but it leads men to righteousness. The expiatory sacrifice of Jesus brought justification of life for all who believe in him, because he atoned for all our sins. Therefore, God the Father will no longer remember our sins for the sake of God the Son. For the author of the book of Hebrews wrote, **"For by one offering he has fully perfected forever those being sanctified"** (Hebrews 10:14).

And our justification reconciles us with God. Paul told how Jesus' sacrificial death allows us (those who believe in him) to be reconciled with God: **"For while we were yet weak, in due time Christ died for the impious. For scarcely for a righteous man will some man die, indeed perhaps for the good man some man would even dare to die. But God commends his love toward us, that, while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, now having been made righteous by his blood, we will be saved from the wrath through him. For if, while being enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of his Son, much more having been reconciled we will be saved by his life. And not only so, but also taking pride in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received the reconciliation"** (Romans 5:6-11).

Hallelujah, praise God! Is our beloved heavenly Father not a God of life giving mercy as well as justice? For Isaiah also said: **"And therefore Jehovah will wait, that he may be gracious to you. And therefore he will be exalted, that he may have mercy upon you, for Jehovah is a God of justice. Blessed are all those who wait for him"** (Isaiah 30:18).

Isaiah said Jehovah would have mercy on us because he is a God of justice. How wonderful God's justice is, for it requires him to show mercy to all who belong to Jesus Christ.

And now Paul's words can be more clearly understood, when he said, **"… all have sinned and come short of the glory of God, being made righteous freely by his grace, through the redemption in Christ Jesus, whom God set forth an expiatory sacrifice through faith in his blood, for proof of his justice, because of the passing over of the sins that have formerly occurred (in the forbearance of God), for proof of his justice at the present time, for him to be righteous, and who makes the man from Jesus' faith righteous"** (Romans 3:23-26).

Here is a summary explanation of those powerful words: No man can become righteous before God by a legal system because no man can keep from violating it one way or another. For one violation makes us unrighteous and worthy of condemnation just as with Adam. We can only be made righteous **"freely by his grace, through the redemption in Christ Jesus."** Jesus was the **"expiatory sacrifice"** that was able to atone for our sins, but it is only **"through faith in his blood."** And that expiatory sacrifice was **"proof of his justice."** For God is **"passing over of the sins that have formerly occurred"** because of the payment of that sacrifice. And that is **"proof of his justice at the present time,"** meaning now that the expiatory sacrifice has been made. That passing over of sins was necessary **"for him to be righteous."** Otherwise, God would not be just if he did not accept that expiatory sacrifice for those who have faith in Jesus. And by accepting that expiatory sacrifice he proves his own justice and righteousness, and makes **"the man from Jesus' faith righteous."**

We have been made righteous because we were completely forgiven. Our sins have been washed away in the blood of Christ. For the apostle John was referring to Jesus, when he said, **"To him who loves us and washed us from our sins by his blood and made us a kingdom, priests to his God and Father, to him is the glory and the dominion into the ages of the ages. Truly"** (Revelation 1:5-6). And Paul said to his brothers in Corinth, **"Or know ye not that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not led astray. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate men, nor homosexuals, nor greedy men, nor thieves, nor drunkards, nor the slanderous, nor the predatory will inherit the kingdom of God. And some of you were these things, but ye were washed, but ye were sanctified, but ye were made righteous in the name of the Lord Jesus, and in the Spirit of our God"** (First Corinthians 6:9-11).

And now we are immune from the reproaches of our enemies. Remember how Satan continually accused us in heaven. And all the enemies of the righteous find ways to continually accuse us. Most of their accusations are false, but some are true. For we have all been guilty of sin to some extent.

Jesus the only begotten Son of God loves us, and he wants us to be his brothers in heaven with God. Therefore, he suffered and died to redeem us. As Paul said, **"For Christ also did not please himself, but as it is written, The reproaches of those who reproached thee fell upon me"** (Romans 15:3). He redeemed us in order to defeat the reproaches of his enemies against us. Therefore, Paul could say, **"Who will accuse against the chosen of God?**

God is he who makes righteous. Who is he who will condemn? It is Christ who died, but more, who also was raised up, who also is at the right hand of God, who also appeals for us" (Romans 8:33-34). As faithful disciples of Christ we are now immune from the reproaches of our enemies. Which means we cannot be condemned even if we offend God. I explain more about that in the next Part of this book.

Some Erroneous Beliefs

There is a popular error that says Jesus saved us by being punished for our sins. However, in the justice of God no man can suffer punishment in substitution for another. That is taught in the story about the golden calf. The record says, **"And Moses returned to Jehovah, and said, Oh, this people have sinned a great sin, and have made gods of gold for them. Yet now, if thou will forgive their sin—, and if not, blot me, I pray thee, out of thy book which thou have written. And Jehovah said to Moses, Whoever has sinned against me, him will I blot out of my book"** (Exodus 32:31-33). The law even commanded against it: **"The fathers shall not be put to death for the sons, neither shall the sons be put to death for the fathers. Every man shall be put to death for his own sin"** (Deuteronomy 24:16).

When Isaiah said, "**Jehovah has laid on him the iniquity of us all"** (Isaiah 53:6), that meant God commanded Jesus to redeem our debts to him (our iniquities), not be punished for us. Another passage about him says, **"For the man who knew no sin was made sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in him"** (Second Corinthians 5:21). God did not make Jesus become sin. It was the wicked leaders of the Jews who portrayed him as a sinner.

It is similar to the passage which says, **"Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us. For it is written, Cursed is every man who hangs on a tree"** (Galatians 3:13). The spirit of Christ was never cursed; it was only his corpse on the cross (a tree) that was cursed. But that too was because of the evil leaders of the Jews. Jesus was "made sin" unjustly, and he became "a curse for us" because of the wickedness of the rulers of the Jews. And God required Jesus to endure all of that so he could atone for our sins.

Jehovah laid upon him our iniquities by commanding him to redeem us. Jesus earned the right to redeem us by the total self-sacrifice of his sinless life. That was how he atoned for our sins and saved us. It was not done by being punished for us. For in the justice of God no man can suffer punishment in substitution for another. God used a just way for Christ to save us.

Regarding Mohammedanism, now commonly called Islam, the word of God teaches that Jesus alone is qualified to be our redeemer. Muslims deny the divinity of Jesus, and they deny that God is a Father. Mohammed, who claimed to be greater than Christ, is clearly a false prophet. Followers of Mohammed worship a god they call Allah. They and their apologists claim Allah is the same as Jehovah, which is absolutely false. Allah is the name of the moon god worshiped by the Arabs during Mohammed's time. Those people were polythe-

ists, and Allah is one among many gods they worshiped. Mohammed insisted Allah was the only true god, which was why he was persecuted at the beginning. That Allah was their moon god is the reason why we see many signs of the crescent moon on their flags, mosques, and other things. Allah is a false god perpetrated by Mohammed as the true God.

During these spiritually degenerate times the majority of the non-Muslim world reinforces the idea that Allah and God are the same so as to make Islam more acceptable. But if you want to be faithful to the truth, and be right with God, never equate him with Allah. The Koran (or Quran) is their sacred book, and they claim it was written by Mohammed. It was written in Arabic, and it uses the name Allah for their god. However, most translators of that book change the word Allah to God. That change is a fraudulent use of the holy name of God, and it adds support for that false religion. Mohammed invented his religion 500 years after the Bible was written, and it is obvious he stole many ideas from it. He even copied many of its stories for the Koran, but perverted them to support his false religion. Nevertheless, he kept the name Allah for their god.

Adam Clarke, who wrote a popular nineteenth century commentary about the Bible, spoke of the Koran. He said it was "a motley mixture of all bad crafts, with here and there a portion of heavenly fire, stolen from the Divine altar in the Old and New Testaments, to give some vitality to the otherwise inert mass" (from his commentary on Numbers 3:1). I have read much of the Koran, and agree completely with that assessment. It is ironic that Mohammed and the Arabs who invented that religion claim Ishmael, a son of Abraham's maidservant, was their founding father. For here is what the heavenly agent said about Ishmael: **"And he will be a wild donkey among men, his hand against every man, and every man's hand against him, and he shall dwell in the presence of all his brothers"** (Genesis 16:12).

Be not deceived by the seductive words of the followers of Mohammed and their many apologists. That false religion is a growing threat to every disciple of Christ. Be a good soldier of Christ, and fight against it with **"the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God**" (Ephesians 6:17) at every opportunity you have. And remember these words of Jesus: **"... the truth will make you free"** (John 8:32).

Satan's Desperation?

Some may wonder why Satan wanted to have Jesus killed if it meant losing his case with God. Perhaps he did not know it would happen until it was too late. Even Jesus' apostles did not realize his suffering and death were to atone for our sins. However, I think it more probable that Satan was fully aware of it. Indeed, God may even have revealed it to him, which would have made the devil's efforts to tempt Jesus even stronger. That way nobody could ever argue that Jesus was not tempted fully.

Either way, perhaps the devil saw that he was losing anyhow, and he wanted to preserve his earthly power. Apparently he had run out of ways to try to defeat Jesus, for he saw that he had resisted every effort made to tempt him. Moreover, Jesus was getting more influential, with a growing number of disciples. It was, of course, fear of Jesus' growing influence on

the people that led disciples of the Devil (the leaders of the Jews) to want him crucified (see John 11:47-50).

Thus, it seems, Satan's last effort to defeat Jesus while he was in a body of flesh was to subject him to that terrible ordeal hoping it would cause him to disobey God. And if that failed, it would at least disrupt his following, and remove him as a threat to Satan's kingdom. For God has allowed Satan to gain and maintain the kingship of this world. (A popular myth says that hell is the domain of Satan. Not so, his domain is the world.) Thus, apparently by getting rid of Jesus, Satan would have an easier time maintaining his power on earth, which would make it easier for him to continue his war against God here. For the Bible says that the Devil knows he has little time (no doubt meaning relative to eternity). And so he continues trying to destroy all on earth who are on God's side. Thus, Christians will always need to **"fight the good fight"** (First Timothy 6:12).

Part 4:2

THE NEW COVENANT

As disciples of Christ, redeemed by him from condemnation, we are now part of God's new covenant. It is not a covenant of law like the one for the sons of Israel, but a covenant of faith for the disciples of Christ. The old covenant of God with his people Israel was based upon the law of Moses, and that covenant was never intended to be permanent. For when Paul was discouraging the Galatians from following the law of Moses, he said, **"... if a law was given that could make alive, truly righteousness would be from law. But scripture confined all things under sin, so that the promise from faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe. But before faith came we were kept in custody under law, having been confined for faith that was going to be revealed. So that the law became our schoolmaster for Christ, so that we might be made righteous from faith. But faith having come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster"** (Galatians 3:21-25).

Also remember this passage from the book of Jeremiah: **"Behold, the days come, says Jehovah, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah, not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, because they did not continue in my covenant, and I disregarded them, says Jehovah. But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says Jehovah: I will give my laws into their mind, and I will write them on their hearts. And I will be their God, and they shall be my people. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, Know Jehovah, for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest of them, says Jehovah. For I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more"** (Jeremiah 31:31-34).

That new covenant promised by God was established by Jesus Christ, and it is based upon faith, as Paul said, **"... a man is not made righteous from works of law, instead through faith of Jesus Christ. And we believed in Christ Jesus, so that we might be made righteous from faith of Christ, and not from works of law, because no flesh will be made righteous from works of law"** (Galatians 2:16). What God has always wanted is faith in him and his righteousness, a living faith that leads to obedience, like that of Abraham. Therefore, those who believe and trust God are made righteous by him, and they will live righteously. If any man does not live righteously, that shows he is not of God, no matter what he says. For the apostle John said, **"He who says, I know him, and does not keep his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in this man"** (First John 2:4).

Those who have no faith in God and his righteousness live in sin, and they have no hope of eternal life. They live the way they want without regard for the will of God. Most of the people of the world live that way. They will be judged by his laws of righteousness, and they will be condemned by those laws. Jews who have no faith in Christ, but trust their law of Moses will be condemned by the law of Moses. For every man judged by law will be condemned by law, because every man eventually violates law. Indeed, Paul said, **"For as**

many as are from works of law are under a curse, for it is written, Cursed is every man who does not continue in all things written in the book of the law, to do them" (Galatians 3:10).

What Paul said was about the law of Moses, but it applies to all legal systems. Remember Paul said: **"For as many as have sinned without law will also be destroyed without law, and as many as have sinned in law will be judged by law. For the hearers of the law are not righteous with God, but the doers of the law will be made righteous. For when the Gentiles who have no law do by nature the things of the law, these men, not having law, are a law to themselves"** (Romans 2:12-14). Therefore, all men not in faith are under law, meaning a legal system, whether a formal one like the law of Moses or the informal one that is innate to all of us. And all men under law are under a curse.

The Curse of Law

Law is a curse because we lack the strength of our spirit to obey every law, and James said, **"For whoever keeps the whole law, and stumbles on one, he has become guilty of all"** (James 2:10). Therefore, any violation makes a man guilty, and guilt brings condemnation. One sin brought the condemnation of death to Adam, and one sin brings the condemnation of death to each of us. As Paul said: **"... just as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin, so also death passed to all men, in that all sinned"** (Romans 5:12). No man, save the Son of God himself, has the strength of character in this sinful world to be perfectly obedient. Therefore, through law we all end being condemned. As Paul said, **"For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God"** (Romans 3:23), including Paul himself: **"And I was alive once apart from law, but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died. And I found to me, the commandment being for life, this is for death. For sin, having taken opportunity through the commandment, deceived me, and by it killed me"** (Romans 7:9-11).

It is through law that we are condemned. For Paul said, **"The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law"** (First Corinthians 15:56). Therefore, without law sin has no power to kill us: **"… apart from law sin is dead"** (Romans 7:8). Sin cannot kill us without laws, because without laws we cannot sin. Paul warned the Galatian Christians who wanted to keep the law of Moses, that relying on it for salvation would bring them under a curse, since it inevitably brings the condemnation of death. Without law we are safe, because unless there are rules (laws) to break, and we know about those rules (see John 9:41), we cannot become a violator. For Paul said, **"... sin is not imputed when there is no law"** (Romans 5:13). But as soon as we learn about such rules temptation comes and deceives us into breaking them: **"For sin, having taken opportunity through the commandment, deceived me, and by it killed me"** (Romans 7:11).

Thus, because there was a rule to break, and temptations always come, the rebellious nature of our flesh revives (see Romans 7:14-25), and deceives us into thinking sin is something good to do. Consequently we sin and come under the curse of death. Hence, the power to

commit sin comes from the existence of laws or commandments to violate. Only the Son of God had enough faith in God and the strength of character to resist every temptation.

Therefore, law (whether formal or informal) becomes the means of our death. Of course, law itself does not cause our death, but it does give the potential to commit sin, and sin does kill. For remember, Paul said, **"The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law"** (First Corinthians 15:56).

Although law brings death instead of life, it is not because law is evil. For Paul said, **"What will we say then? The law is sin? May it not happen!"** (Romans 7:7). And again he said, **"Is the law therefore against the promises of God? May it not happen! For if a law was given that could make alive, truly righteousness would be from law"** (Galatians 3:21). The law failed to promote life because of the nature of man. It is because of our own weakness of character in this earthly body that law (although designed to promote justice and righteousness) eventually condemns us all. Therefore, Paul could say, **"So the law is indeed holy, and the commandment is holy and righteous and good"** (Romans 7:12). Nevertheless, Paul spoke of the failure of the law when he said, **"For the impotence of the law, in that it was weak because of the flesh ..."** (Romans 8:3).

Remember how Jesus' faithful apostles fell asleep on watch just before his betrayal. Now falling asleep on watch is a serious offense. Indeed, in the U.S. military sleeping on watch during wartime is a capital offense. However, those were rare circumstances for the apostles. Jesus knew they were greatly confused and under severe emotional stress, having warned them of what was going to happen to him. It was the only time Peter ever denied him. Therefore, Jesus did not condemn them. And he was not forced to condemn them by law, because he does not hold his disciples under a legal system. Nevertheless, he did admonish them.

Some of the Jews who converted to Christ wanted the new Gentile converts to keep the law of Moses. During a conference about that issue, Peter said, **"Now therefore why do ye challenge God, to place a yoke upon the neck of the disciples, which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear? But through the grace of the Lord Jesus, we believe to be saved, in the same way as those men also"** (Acts 15:10-11).

Legal systems are yokes upon our necks because of our failure to keep from breaking them. God lets us fail (but does not cause it) to defeat pride, and to prove that he alone is righteous. As Paul said, **"For ye are saved by grace through faith, and this a gift of God, not from you, not from works, so that not any man may boast"** (Ephesians 2:8-9), and, **"Now we know that as many things as the law says, it says to those in the law, so that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become accountable to God. Because from works of law no flesh will be made right before him, for through law is knowledge of sin"** (Romans 3:19-20). And remember this passage about Jesus: **"… whom God set forth an expiatory sacrifice through faith in his blood, for proof of his justice, because of the passing over of the sins that have formerly occurred (in the forbearance of God), for proof of his justice at the present time, for him to be righteous, and who**

makes the man from Jesus' faith righteous. Where then is the boasting? It is excluded. By what law, of works? No, but by a law of faith" (Romans 3:25-27).

RELIANCE ON LAW

There are many other reasons why legal systems fail. It is foolish to rely only upon law to promote righteousness. A proverb originated by John Adams our second president, says, "Ours is a government of laws not men." That idea has become popular, but such faith in laws is misguided. Jesus was often accused of violating the law of the sabbath day. One answer he gave was: **"The sabbath came into being for sake of man, and not man for sake of the sabbath"** (Mark 2:27). Likewise, laws are made for sake of man, and not man for sake of laws. Legal systems are aids, not solutions. A government of laws and not men will eventually fail. I have no doubt if John Adams were alive today he would judge our modern governmental system as failing. It is failing because it is controlled by sinful men.

Reliance upon law alone will defeat justice as often as it will promote it. For example, legal systems have often been used to do evil. Laws have been used to rob, cheat, deceive, corrupt, and yes, even to kill innocent men. For example, king David ordered the commander of his army to expose one of his soldiers, Uriah, to the enemy in the hope he would be killed. And so he was (see Second Samuel 11). David had the legal right to give such an order. But it was a crafty device designed to conceal the adultery he had committed with the man's wife. That entire affair was the only time in David's life that brought God's wrath upon him (see First Kings 15:5). It was a terrible sin. And David suffered God's punishment the rest of his life because of it. David repented of that sin, and his remorse never left him. However, the world is filled with crafty men who manipulate laws so they can do whatever they want, and they have no conscience for repentance. Moreover, the more laws men create, the easier it is for them to manipulate. That is one reason why wicked men love to have many laws.

I once spoke with a lawyer in an effort to help a man being cheated in a land sale. The old, seasoned lawyer first said there was nothing that could be done to help the man being cheated. His counsel would have ended there if I had not told him the name of the man being cheated. As soon as he heard the man's name, he said, "Oh, I know him. Well, there is a way." That sort of thing goes on constantly. There are now so many laws in our land, that clever lawyers can pick and choose the ones they need to achieve their goals, whatever those goals may be. And unscrupulous men use their cunning (or their money to hire cunning men) to constantly manipulate legalisms to defeat justice. Men like that in our government constantly manipulate the laws and the courts to do whatever they want regardless of the will of the people, or regardless of what the United States Constitution says, or regardless of whether it is just. They excuse themselves by saying it is all perfectly legal. I have a friend who was almost cheated (in a moral sense, but not a legal sense) out of his house and property because the bank which held his mortgage demanded immediate payment of all the debt. It seems that buried in the obscure language and fine print of the contract he had signed (the kind lawyers love to create), were words to the effect that the bank had that right.

I remember reading many years ago in a news magazine how modern Jews in Israel who claim to keep the Torah (the law of Moses) have found a clever loophole in one of the laws. Remember, the law commands that there be a sabbath year for the land. During every seventh year crops were not to be grown; the land was to lay fallow. Now Jews, like nearly everyone else, do not want to lose out on a year's profit. So they arranged a legal contract with some Arab farmers who have no such commandment. The Arabs then grew crops on the land, and shared the profits with the Jews. Thus, the Jews could boast of "keeping the law" by not growing crops themselves during the sabbath year, but still enjoy profits from its cultivation. Again, such things are done constantly by those with power and cunning.

Jews are tempted to create such devices because they pursue (or claim to pursue) righteousness by law. Remember, Paul said, **"But Israel who pursued a law of righteousness, did not arrive to a law of righteousness. Why? Because it was not from faith but as from works of law"** (Romans 9:31-32). Laws can help bring righteousness only when men love truth and justice. Otherwise "lawfulness" degenerates into a depraved game of legal maneuvers, where the goal is "winning" by the rules (often unfairly contrived), and not the achievement of justice and righteousness. Jews have the reputation of being "shrewd operators," and as such are looked upon with suspicion. They have a different mind-set from Christians. Their concept of justice is based upon blind legalism: a deal is a deal, even if it is unjust. And those they call the Goyim (non-Jews) are considered fair prey. When I was a child and someone was tricked into making a bad deal, we said he was "Jewed." I remember reading many years ago of a man who boasted about becoming rich by purchasing land from a widow that was far below its value. Christians know that true justice is based upon righteousness and love for others. As Jesus said, **"All things therefore, as many as ye may want that men should do to you, so also do ye to them, for this is the law and the prophets"** (Matthew 7:12).

What God wants (in every working situation) is that the principles of righteousness should take precedence over legalism. Jesus demonstrated that in his own life (see for examples, Matthew 12 and 15, and Mark 3). Insisting that all activity be regulated by legalisms is something to keep people in bondage. The shrewdest of aggressive and unscrupulous men especially promote legalisms so they can manipulate them for selfish advantage. Promoters of such legalisms do not themselves adhere strictly to all laws. They are power hungry hypocrites who prey upon the powerless and the unknowing. I groan when I see how such men have gained control of our government. I recently saw a man interviewed on TV who had been involved in government. He said politics was a game, and you needed to know the rules to win. That seems to be how the great majority now think. It is just another example of how the spirit of our country has been corrupted by reliance on legalism. Remember, Paul said, **"For if a law was given that could make alive, truly righteousness would be from law"** (Galatians 3:21).

The Purpose of Legal Systems

After showing that legal systems cannot bring righteousness, Paul said, **"Why then the law? It was added on account of transgressions ..."** (Galatians 3:19). Thus, the need for

legal systems is because of sinners. In another letter Paul elaborated on this point when he said, **"But we know that the law is good, if any man uses it lawfully, knowing this, that law is not laid down for righteous men, but for the lawless and rebellious, for the irreverent and sinful, for the impious and profane, for father killers and mother killers, for man killers, for fornicators, for homosexuals, for kidnappers, for liars, for perjurers, and if there is any other thing contrary to the sound doctrine according to the good news of the glory of the blessed God, of which I was entrusted"** (First Timothy 1:8-11).

Legal systems are required to discourage, control, and punish sinful men. Remember, men who love truth and righteousness, who love their neighbors with a pure heart and a good conscience, such men need only knowledge to guide them, not a legal system filled with restrictions. Without the bonds of a legal system righteous men are most creative. On the other hand, without the bonds of a legal system sinful men go wild and live like animals, unrestrained except by the elemental laws of the jungle. The actions of a people during times when law and order break down, as with disaster situations, reveals their character. A sinful people respond by looting and wanton destruction. Righteous people work to provide aid and comfort to the needy.

Very few people know that when God first brought the children of Israel out of Egyptian bondage he had no intention of burdening them with all that is now found in the law of Moses, nor did he intend to keep them wandering in the wilderness forty years. However, in spite of the many great signs and wonders God performed in their sight, and in spite of the fact that he himself spoke to them in a mighty voice from Mount Sinai, and in spite of his continual loving attention and care, they frequently complained and rebelled, and condemned both him and his servant Moses (just as so many do to him and to his servants today). And so God put the yoke of many laws upon their necks, laws that the Israelites have never fully kept.

They did not keep them all in ancient times, and no Jew keeps them now. For example, there were many commands about various kinds of animal sacrifices for many different reasons: daily offerings, special festival periods, atonement for many kinds of sin, at every human birth, and others. Modern Jews, no matter how zealous for the law they claim to be, make no attempt to perform any of those required sacrifices. Nor do they keep the laws about the priesthood, or the laws about land transactions, or the laws of disease and cleanliness. What they have done is to pick and choose those few of Moses' laws they want to obey, and then add to them a host of other traditions they have invented through the centuries after Moses.

The main reason they do not obey the sacrificial laws of Moses is because (even though God gave them) they are not good laws; they are impractical and inexpedient, especially in modern times. Remember, God himself said they were **"not good"** when he spoke to Ezekiel the prophet, saying, **"Moreover I swore to them in the wilderness, that I would scatter them among the nations, and disperse them through the countries, because they had not executed my ordinances, but had rejected my statutes, and had profaned my sabbaths, and their eyes were after their fathers' idols. Moreover also I gave them**

statutes that were not good, and ordinances in which they will not live. And I polluted them in their own gifts, in that they caused to pass through *the fire* all that opens the womb, that I might make them desolate, to the end that they might know that I am Jehovah" (Ezekiel 20:23-26).

The prophet said that God gave them **"statutes that were not good, and ordinances in which they will not live ... ."** For, as I have shown from the holy scriptures, legal systems do not bring life, they bring death. Moreover, God said, **"I polluted them in their own gifts, in that they caused to pass through *the fire* all that opens the womb, that I might make them desolate."** God commanded every first-born of their domestic animals be killed and burnt in sacrifice to him. Although "unclean" beasts (usually beasts of burden) could be redeemed by some other offering. First-born children were also to be redeemed by killing an animal in their place. And the commandments were so numerous and so detailed that it was very difficult for even the most dedicated man to keep from breaking any of them with the passage of time. Thus, God **"polluted them in their own gifts."** They were polluted by their offerings because they were unable to obey them completely. Remember, Paul said, **"... the law entered so that the offence might abound ..."** (Romans 5:20). It was punishment from God's wrath, which was kindled by their continual unfaithfulness.

Such animal sacrifices are not what God really wants. Here are some scriptures that describe what he wants from us:

> **For thou delight not in sacrifice, else I would give it. Thou have no pleasure in burnt-offering. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit. A broken and contrite heart, O God, thou will not despise** (Psalm 51:16-17).
>
> **He has shown thee, O man, what is good. And what does Jehovah require of thee, but to do justly, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with thy God?** (Micah 6:8).
>
> **For I desire mercy, and not sacrifice, and the knowledge of God more than burnt-offerings** (Hosea 6:6).
>
> **Therefore when he comes into the world, he says, Sacrifice and offering thou did not desire, but thou prepared for me a body. In whole burnt offerings, and for sin thou were not pleased. Then I said, Lo, I come (in the volume of a book it is written about me) to do thy will, O God** (Hebrews 10:5-7).

What God wants is a broken and contrite heart (because of sorrow for our sins), doing justice, loving kindness, walking humbly with him, showing mercy, having the knowledge of God, and doing his will. Legal systems are imposed upon the faithless and the rebellious because they need external restraints on their evil desires, lest they roam free to create more lawlessness. This is another reason why we must support governments, as Paul said, **"For rulers are not a source of fear to the good works, but to the evil. And do thou desire not to fear the office of authority? Do what is good, and thou will have praise from it. For he is a helper of God to thee for what is good. But if thou do what is evil, be afraid, for**

he does not bear the sword in vain. For he is a helper of God, vengeful for wrath to the man who commits evil" (Romans 13:3-4).

The righteous, however, need no legal systems. All righteous men need is wisdom, because their desire is to do good; they just need to know how. Thus, the law of God they need is not a legal system, but words of truth and wisdom, wherever they may be found—in the Bible or outside of it—for the Bible could not possibly contain all truth. But since this world is a mixture of both good men and bad, legal systems are needed to impose justice upon wrong-doers. Righteous men who have learned God's truth will impose justice upon themselves, and righteous men who are not yet learned will accept the wise judgment of righteous men who have learned. Thus, their love for justice and righteousness frees them from the need for external control. For their control is within; that is, the knowledge of what is right, and the will to do it. In contrast, the unrighteous need external controls. Thus, statutes and ordinances, and the means to enforce them, are necessary as long as there are unrighteous men.

The Law of Christ

Paul said that Jesus brought salvation to all those who love righteousness, **"having abolished in his flesh the enmity—the law of the commandments in ordinances …"** (Ephesians 2:15). And again he said, **"For Christ is the end of law for righteousness, to every man who believes"** (Romans 10:4). That does not mean we are in a lawless condition; we are under another kind of law. For although Paul said, **"We therefore consider a man to be made righteous by faith independent of works of law,"** he added, **"Do we then make law void through faith? May it not happen! Instead, we establish law"** (Romans 3:28-31). We who belong to Christ are no longer under a legal system. Nevertheless, we are still under law, his law: **"Bear the burdens of each other, and so fulfill the law of the Christ"** (Galatians 6:2). James called it a law of liberty: **"So speak ye, and so do ye, as men who are to be judged by a law of liberty"** (James 2:12). It is a law of liberty because it is not a legal system.

Before Christ we were under a covenant of law. Remember, however, Paul said that law was our schoolmaster for Christ, to prepare us for a new covenant. God, through Christ, has created a new covenant for the disciples of Christ based upon faith and the law of liberty, not a complex legal system. Remember how Jehovah promised a new covenant, as reported in the book of Jeremiah: **"Behold, the days come, says Jehovah, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah, not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers ..."** (Jeremiah 31:31-32).

This new covenant is not based upon outward obedience to a legal system, but upon an inner transformation of the heart. For Jehovah said, **"I will give my laws into their mind, and I will write them on their hearts"** (Jeremiah 31:33). It is a covenant of the spirit, as Paul said: **"… not that we are sufficient of ourselves to reckon anything as from ourselves, but our sufficiency is from God, who also made us qualified helpers of a new covenant, not of a document, but of a spirit, for the document kills but the spirit makes**

alive" (Second Corinthians 3:5-6). This new covenant is based upon righteousness in a man's heart and spirit, and not his genes or any legal system.

Each Israelite became a part of the old covenant as soon as he was born, and they all had to be taught about God afterward. But no man can become a part of the new covenant until he first knows about it, and accepts it within his heart. Thus the words, **"they shall all know me."** And this new covenant is not based upon a legal contract which commits God to give us something if we earn it, or withhold it if we do not. For no man has the strength of character to earn salvation from God. The salvation we receive is a gift, based upon his merciful kindness—his grace. As the apostle John said, **"Because the law was given through Moses. Grace and truth came to be through Jesus Christ"** (John 1:17). No man has a right to boast about deserving salvation, for it is not something we can earn.

Salvation is a gift of God's grace, but it is not given to all men. It is given only to those of us who love truth, and believe in Jesus Christ. Thus Paul spoke those profound words, which I quote yet again: **"But now a righteousness of God has been manifested independent of law, being witnessed by the law and the prophets. And the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ is for all and upon all those who believe, for there is no distinction. For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God, being made righteous freely by his grace, through the redemption in Christ Jesus, whom God set forth an expiatory sacrifice through faith in his blood, for proof of his justice, because of the passing over of the sins that have formerly occurred (in the forbearance of God), for proof of his justice at the present time, for him to be righteous, and who makes the man from Jesus' faith righteous. Where then is the boasting? It is excluded. By what law, of works? No, but by a law of faith. We therefore consider a man to be made righteous by faith independent of works of law"** (Romans 3:21-28).

So then our relationship with God does not depend upon our obedience to a legal system, but upon his merciful kindness because of our obedient trust in his Son. For Paul said, **"But if ye are led by the Spirit ye are not under law"** (Galatians 5:18). And now, being freed from a legal system, we who are under the new covenant cannot violate legalities because there are no statutes and ordinances to violate. And since legal systems bring death, the absence of them means life from the dead. For Jesus said, **"Truly, truly, I say to you, that he who hears my word, and believes him who sent me, has eternal life. And he does not come into condemnation, but has passed from death into life"** (John 5:24). Thus, since there is no longer a legal system over us, then we can no longer become criminals before God, for how can we violate what does not apply to us? John expressed it this way: **"Every man who has been begotten of God is not doing sin, because his seed abides in him, and he cannot sin, because he has been begotten of God"** (First John 3:9).

You see, although in our fleshly weakness we may offend God, nevertheless, we are unable to commit a crime against him (sin), because we are now his adopted children, and he no longer treats us as criminals when we offend him. For Paul said, **"Just as David also tells the blessedness of the man to whom God imputes righteousness independent of works,**

saying, Blessed are those whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. Blessed is a man to whom the Lord does, no, not impute sin" (Romans 4:6-8).

As disciples of Christ, we are now children in his household (although we are not yet in his heavenly world). All children at various times offend their parents, but they are not cast out as criminals, because family interactions are not based upon a legal system; they are based upon mutual love. Therefore, because of our new special relationship with God, as a result of our redemption, he no longer treats us like criminals when we offend him (**"the Lord does, no, not impute sin"**), any more than an earthly father treats his own children like criminals when they misbehave. For as adopted children we are no longer in bondage to a legal system.

We are sons, not servants, as Paul said: **"Consequently nothing is condemnation now to those in Christ Jesus, who walk not according to flesh but according to Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus freed me from the law of sin and of death"** (Romans 8:1-2), and, **"For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God. For ye did not receive a spirit of bondage again for fear, but ye received a spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father"** (Romans 8:14-15). And remember the words of Jesus: **"Truly, truly, I say to you, that an hour comes, and now is, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God, and those who hear will live"** (John 5:24). He was referring to the spiritually dead. Those like the sinful widows Paul spoke about: **"But she who is self-indulgent is dead while she lives"** (First Timothy 5:6). Jesus said they could live if they listened to him—**"those who hear will live"—**which means believe and obey.

OBEDIENCE

We are saved by faith, but there is still the need for obedience. Although as children of God we are no longer bound to a legal system, we are not free from law. Remember Paul's words: **"We therefore consider a man to be made righteous by faith independent of works of law ... . Do we then make law void through faith? May it not happen! Instead, we establish law"** (Romans 3:31). Although we are free from a legal system, we are now under the law of Christ, sometimes called the law of liberty. And by knowing that, we can now more clearly understand what Paul meant by these words: **"For I, through law** [the law of redemption through Christ]**, died to law** [legalism]**, so that I might live to God"** (Galatians 2:19).

Thus, being freed from a legal system does not mean we have no obligations. For Paul said, **"And to the Jews I became as a Jew, so that I might gain Jews, to those under law, as under law, so that I might gain those under law, to those without law, as without law (not being without law to God, but within law to Christ), so that I might gain men without law"** (First Corinthians 9:20-21). Paul said he was **"to those without law, as without law,"** but he went on to say that he was **"not being without law to God, but within law to Christ ... ."**

God has abolished the old covenant with its legal system, but he has established a new covenant having the law of Christ. Now remember, a covenant is an agreement or contract

made between parties. The old contract was primarily a legal one, with stipulations based upon statutes and ordinances, with only a little said about the state of the mind. In contrast, the new is a spiritual agreement, based upon what is within our hearts: mutual love and loyalty, with only a few strict commandments. When I married my faithful wife, we were required to sign a legal contract with the state witnessed in one of their buildings. But we did not consider ourselves married until we exchanged vows in our church building witnessed by our Christian brothers and sisters. Those vows were very different from the state contract, because our mutual commitment was not based upon a written document, but upon the love and loyalty we have for each other within our hearts.

That is an example of the nature of God's new covenant with mankind. Indeed, that kind of covenant has always been God's desire. For when Jesus was asked what was the greatest commandment of the law of Moses, he said, **"Thou shall love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart, and with thy whole soul, and with thy whole mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like it, Thou shall love thy neighbor as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law, and the prophets"** (Matthew 22:37-40). And as a servant of Christ, Paul said, **"Owe no man anything except to love each other, for he who loves the other has fulfilled law. For this, Thou shall not commit adultery, Thou shall not murder, Thou shall not steal, Thou shall not testify falsely, Thou shall not covet, and if there be any other commandment it is summarized in this saying, in, Thou shall love thy neighbor as thyself. Love works no evil to the neighbor. Therefore love is the fulfillment of law"** (Romans 13:8-10).

Hence, love is the foundation of law and righteousness. Remember, however, love is more than a feeling. It is a force that energizes righteous living, and the fruits of righteous living are good deeds. And the more we have the Spirit of God and his love within us (see Romans 5:5), the more we will be motivated for good deeds. Thus, genuine children of God, energized by his love and guided by his truth, prove their genuineness by bearing the fruits of righteousness; for all men are known by their fruits. Is it not through God's love that we enjoy his bountiful blessings? Yes, and it is through love that we, his sons, should do good to others. For John said, **"The man doing right is of God"** (Third John 1:11).

God's greatest act of love toward us was when he allowed his only begotten Son to suffer and die in order to save us from eternal condemnation with the devil. John expressed it so well in this very beautiful and familiar passage: **"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, so that every man who believes in him would not perish, but have eternal life. For God sent the Son into the world not that he might condemn the world, but that the world might be saved through him. He who believes in him is not condemned. He who does not believe has been condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God"** (John 3:16-18).

Having proven his love for us, we must now prove our love for him by our faith in Jesus Christ, his only begotten son. But not faith only, for James said, **"... faith apart from works is dead"** (James 2:20). For when the word of God says that we must believe in Jesus Christ, it does not mean to simply acknowledge the truth of his divinity; for even the devils

acknowledged him. An example of that is told in the book of Mark: **"And a man was in their synagogue with an unclean spirit. And he cried out, saying, Oh no! What is with us and with thee, Jesus of Nazareth? Did thou come to destroy us? I know thee who thou are, the Holy man of God"** (1:23-24). James also said, **"Thou believe that there is one God, thou do well. The demons also believe, and shudder"** (James 2:19).

Thus true faith is dynamic, and alive with love, and zealous for good works (see Titus 2:14). For Jesus gave a command saying, **"Thus your light should shine before men, so that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father in the heavens"** (Matthew 5:16). Jesus also said that unless we are fruitful we cannot remain in him: **"I am the true grapevine, and my Father is the farmer. Every branch in me not bearing fruit, he removes it. And every branch that bears fruit, he prunes it, so that it may bear more fruit"** (John 15:1-2).

You see, although the children of God are saved by grace through faith and not works, nevertheless, it is according to works that all men will be rewarded on that last day, and not according to their faith only. As Paul said, **"For we must all appear before the judgment-seat of the Christ, so that each man may receive back about the things that he did through the body, whether good or bad"** (Second Corinthians 5:10). And concerning the great judgment day after the end of the world, John said, **"And I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne, and books were opened, and another book was opened, which is the one of life. And the dead were judged from the things that were written in the books, according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead in them. And they were judged, each according to their works"** (Revelation 20:12-13). Also at the end of John's great vision of heaven, Jesus said to him, **"Behold, I come quickly, and my reward is with me to render to each man as his work will be"** (Revelation 22:12). And good works include obedience to all of Jesus' commands, for he said, **"If ye love me, keep my commandments"** (John 14:15).

Eternal Righteousness

Paul said the wages of sin was death. In contrast to that, the fruits of righteousness are life and progress. Indeed, our life in heaven will be a world filled with righteousness. For remember, Peter said, **"But we anticipate a new heavens and a new earth according to his promise, in which righteousness dwells"** (Second Peter 3:13). Only righteousness will be there because it will be a place of only life and progress. And those who are worthy to live there will be those who have become sons of God because of an obedient faith in him. Therefore, it will be a place of eternal righteousness, where nobody will doubt and challenge God. Consequently, there will be no need for statutes and ordinances of law. And as sons of God we will work eternally with him in peace and joy creating great and wondrous new things unimaginable to us now. For God is the supreme Creator, and he will never stop creating. And as his sons we will create with him. Dear reader, believe in God and put your hope in his eternal righteousness, for every hope in this life eventually fails.

Part 4:3

THE LAW OF SIN

Having been redeemed by Christ we have been freed from bondage to law, and are under the law of liberty. And having forsaken the sinful lusts of our flesh, we are now led by his Spirit. As Paul said to his Galatian brothers, **"For ye, brothers, were called to liberty, only not liberty for an opportunity to the flesh, but be servants to each other through love. For the whole law is fulfilled in one word, in this: Thou shall love thy neighbor as thyself. But if ye bite and devour each other, watch out that ye be not consumed by each other.**

"But I say, walk in the Spirit and ye will, no, not fulfill a lust of the flesh. For the flesh desires against the Spirit, and the Spirit is against the flesh. For these are hostile to each other, so that whatever these things are ye may want, ye may not do. But if ye are led by the Spirit ye are not under law" (Galatians 5:13-18). Christ freed us from subjection to law (legalism) and called us to liberty. But not liberty to sin and the indulgence of our flesh, because the flesh is hostile to righteousness. In order to understand that better you need to know more about the relationship between our body and our spirit.

OUR DUAL NATURE

The Bible teaches that every man is a duality, being both spirit and flesh. Adam was the first man that God created, and here is how he did it: **"And Jehovah God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul"** (Genesis 2:7). What God breathed into Adam was not air. The breath of life that God breathed into Adam was spirit. Of all of the life forms that God created in this world, only man was given breath of life out of God himself, thus making him both flesh and divine spirit. And since we have all inherited our nature from Adam, then it can be said that the spirit of every man came out of God himself. Remember, Paul taught that men are offspring of God, and he certainly did not mean offspring of his body.

Of course, because of sin our bodies return to dust, yet our spirit endures. Solomon wrote about this when he was describing old age. He used lovely but melancholy words to describe how the body gradually weakens and then dies, after which our spirit returns to God: **"Remember also thy Creator in the days of thy youth, before the evil days come, and the years draw nigh, when thou shall say, I have no pleasure in them, before the sun, and the light, and the moon, and the stars, are darkened, and the clouds return after the rain, in the day when the keepers of the house shall tremble, and the strong men shall bow themselves, and the grinders cease because they are few, and those who look out of the windows shall be darkened, and the doors shall be shut in the street, when the sound of the grinding is low, and he shall rise up at the voice of a bird, and all the daughters of music shall be brought low, yea, they shall be afraid of height, and terrors *shall be* in the way, and the almond tree shall blossom, and the grasshopper shall be a burden, and desire shall fail, because man goes to his everlasting home, and the**

mourners go about the streets, before the silver cord is loosed, or the golden bowl is broken, or the pitcher is broken at the fountain, or the wheel broken at the cistern, and the dust returns to the earth as it was, and the spirit returns to God who gave it" (Ecclesiastes 12:1-7).

Although, as Solomon said, our spirit returns to God who gave it, nevertheless, it does not reenter God like the breath from which it came. We are not absorbed back into God. We retain our individuality in spirit forever. However, our relationship with God after physical death depends upon how we are judged on the great judgment day. Jesus taught about that day. For example, when he sent his apostles out to preach, one of the things he said to them was this: **"And whoever will not receive you, nor hear your words, while departing that house or that city, shake off the dust of your feet. Truly I say to you, it will be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment, than for that city"** (Matthew 10:14-15)..

In that great day we will all be judged by how we lived in this body. The apostle Paul told that to the Corinthian brothers when he said, **"For we must all appear before the judgment-seat of the Christ, so that each man may receive back about the things that he did through the body, whether good or bad"** (Second Corinthians 5:10).

Sin in the World

When God first created Adam and Eve they lived in childlike innocence in the garden paradise of Eden. But they violated God's command against eating of the tree of knowledge of good and evil: **"And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make wise, she took of the fruit of it, and ate. And she also gave to her husband with her, and he ate. And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked. And they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons"** (Genesis 3:6-7).

Satan the serpent said to Eve that if they ate the forbidden fruit **"ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil"** (Genesis 3:5), and part of that was true. They were already gods, but they did gain knowledge of good and evil. For the Bible reports, **"And Jehovah God said, Behold, the man has become as one of us—to know good and evil—and now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live forever—therefore Jehovah God sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from where he was taken. So he drove out the man. And he placed at the east of the garden of Eden the Cherubim, and the flame of a sword which turned every way, to guard the way of the tree of life"** (Genesis 3:22-24). The devil also said they would not die if they ate of it, but they did. The devil mixes truth with his lies to more easily deceive and destroy us. He makes sin look appealing, and lies about its consequences.

Paul wrote about how sin entered into the world through Adam: **"... just as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin, so also death passed to all men, in that all sinned. For until law sin was in the world, but sin is not imputed when there is no law. Nevertheless death reigned from Adam until Moses, even over those who did**

not sin in the likeness of Adam's transgression, who is a type of the coming man" (Romans 5:12-14).

Adam's transgression was the willful violation of a command. However, men are still condemned even when their sin is not the violation of a command. Paul said that sin was not imputed when there is no law (commands), but remember he also said earlier that men who do not have a written law still have God's law written in their hearts (see Romans 2:15). And they will be judged by that.

The Corruption of Our Flesh

We are all born with a pure spirit but a corrupted body, a body of sin. And the most corrupt part of our body is our heart, our inner mind. Thus these warnings from the word of God: **"The heart is deceitful above all things, and it is exceedingly corrupt. Who can know it? I, Jehovah, search the mind. I try the heart, even to give every man according to his ways, according to the fruit of his doings"** (Jeremiah 17:9-10), and, **"He who trusts in his own heart is a fool, but he who walks wisely, he shall be delivered"** (Proverbs 28:26).

Knowledge of good and evil

When Adam sinned he gained knowledge of good and evil, which means an intuitive knowledge of the fundamentals of right and wrong. And his premature acquisition of that knowledge unleashed sin into the world. For Paul said, **"... through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin, so also death passed to all men, in that all sinned"** (Romans 5:12).

No doubt God had intended for him to have the knowledge of good and evil eventually, because he placed the tree in the garden. Hence, his acquisition of it was premature. And that premature acquisition of the knowledge of good and evil corrupted our flesh. For Paul said, "**But I say, walk in the Spirit and ye will, no, not fulfill a lust of the flesh. For the flesh desires against the Spirit, and the Spirit is against the flesh. For these are hostile to each other, so that whatever these things are ye may want, ye may not do"** (Galatians 5:16-17).

The desires of the flesh of man are now against the Spirit of God, and we are born that way. For after God destroyed all but Noah and his family with the great flood, he said, **"I will not again curse the ground any more for man's sake, for that the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth. Neither will I again any more smite everything living, as I have done"** (8:21). Solomon also said, **"Foolishness is bound up in the heart of a child, *but* the rod of correction shall drive it far from him"** (Proverbs 22**:**15). Thus, our imagination is now evil from our youth, with foolishness bound up in our young hearts. And that was obviously a result of Adam having eaten of the forbidden fruit, because God did not create man that way. Remember, it was Adam who brought sin into the world, and now all men sin.

Having knowledge of good and evil means we have become more like God: **"And Jehovah God said, Behold, the man has become as one of us, to know good and evil ..."**

(Genesis 3:22). Having knowledge of good and evil gives us the potential to create good and evil. God has knowledge of good and evil, but he never chooses evil (evil in the sense of doing wrong). He knows about evil, but he never creates it. When the Bible says he creates evil it means he creates harm, not wrong. Here are two passages about that: **"See now that I, even I, am he, and there is no god with me. I kill, and I make alive. I wound, and I heal. And there is none that can deliver out of my hand"** (Deuteronomy 32:39), and, **"I form the light, and create darkness. I make peace, and create evil. I am Jehovah who does all these things"** (Isaiah 45:7). He sometimes creates harm but never unrighteously.

Everything he does is right and good, even when he creates harm, such as destroying the antediluvian world. The song of Moses says of him, "**For I will proclaim the name of Jehovah. Ascribe ye greatness to our God. The Rock, his work is perfect, for all his ways are justice, a God of faithfulness and without iniquity, just and right is he"** (Deuteronomy 32:3-4). We, on the other hand, lack the spiritual strength to keep our knowledge of evil from tempting us to sin and create evil.

A body of sin

God brings all of us into this world with a pure, innocent, and undefiled spirit. However, because of the sin of Adam our spirit is housed in a **"body of sin"** (Romans 6:6). The fact that even Jesus was born with a body of sin is shown in this passage: **"... God, having sent his own Son in a form of flesh of sin ..."** (Romans 8:3). Our flesh is a body of sin because its impulses and appetites tempt us to sin.

Even the body of Jesus tempted him to sin. For the scripture says that Jesus **"was tempted in all things in the same way, without sin"** (Hebrews 4:15). And he too had to struggle with the sinful impulses and appetites of his flesh. When Jesus was tempted by the devil in the wilderness, he was hungry (see Matthew 4:2). And no doubt his hungry body urged him to create bread from the stones, as the devil suggested. Otherwise he would not have been tempted.

Of course, not every desire of our flesh leads to sin. And not every physical pleasure is wrong, for God approves some pleasures that are achieved in the right way. However, the more uninhibited a man's behavior, the more he is going to sin. For the basic inclination of our flesh is that of a selfish animal. And unchecked, its complex of impulses and urges always lead to sin. Thus, when the mind is undeveloped, or stupefied by drunkenness, we are most ruled by folly and wickedness. As our minds become wiser we are better able to inhibit its foolishness, but the propensity never goes away. And we are never able to master it fully, especially the tongue, as James said, **"For we all stumble in many things. If any man does not stumble in word, this is a perfect man, able also to bridle the whole body"** (James 3:2).

Apparently if man had waited before eating that fruit we would have been better able to manage our knowledge of good and evil without sinning and creating evil. For there is no sin in having knowledge of evil. We sin when that knowledge leads us to violate righ-

teousness. The Son of God had the strength of character in his spirit to prevent his knowledge of evil from leading him to sin. Hence, he never sinned and became captive in the law of sin.

James also wrote about the inner war of the flesh, stating that was the cause of wars and fightings among men: **"From where are wars and fightings among you? Is it not from here: from your pleasures warring in your body-parts?"** (James 4:1). Peter likewise told how our fleshly lusts war against our soul: **"Beloved, I beseech you as aliens and sojourners, to abstain from the fleshly lusts, which war against the soul"** (First Peter 2:11).

The Law of Sin

When we sin we sell ourselves under sin. For Paul said, **"I am carnal, having been sold under sin"** (7:14). He said further, **"For I do not do good that I want, instead, wrong that I do not want, this I do"** (Romans 7:19). Jesus Christ was a man, but he never did wrong. Thus, being sold under sin is *not* innate to man. Our flesh is a body of sin, but our eternal spirit is pure. It is pure until we surrender to our flesh and commit sin. We inherit a pure spirit because we inherit what God breathed into Adam. That is what makes us offspring of God. Like Jesus we are born with a flesh of sin, but it is only when we sin that we become sold under sin. And that means we become victims of the sin of our flesh, which never happened to our Lord.

Every other man becomes captive in the law of sin, because we all sin. And so every righteous man struggles like Paul did. From the time of birth every righteous man must struggle to overcome the forces of evil within his flesh. Yet, like Paul, no man can overcome them totally, because every man sells himself under sin and becomes captive in the law of sin, every man but Christ. Paul said about himself, **"Consequently I find the law in my wanting to do good, that evil is present in me. For I delight in the law of God according to the inner man, but I see a different law in my body-parts, warring against the law of my mind, and taking me captive in the law of sin, which is in my body-parts"** (Romans 7:21-23).

Jesus spoke of how our lives are defiled when he was criticized for eating without first washing. He said **"Not that which enters into the mouth defiles the man, but that which comes out of the mouth, this defiles the man"** (Matthew 15:11). Later when his disciples asked him to explain what he meant, Jesus answered, **"Do ye not yet understand, that everything entering into the mouth goes into the belly, and is cast out into a toilet? But the things coming out of the mouth come forth from the heart, and those things defile the man. For from the heart comes forth evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witnessings, revilings. These are things defiling the man. But to eat with unwashed hands does not defile the man"** (Matthew 15:17-20). And once defiled, we spend the rest of our lives handicapped, being **"captive in the law of sin"** (Romans 7:23).

Apparently when we first sin our flesh becomes permanently captive in the law of sin. We are born with an innocent spirit, but our flesh tempts us to sin. And when our spirit sins our flesh becomes permanently bound to the law of sin. Which then makes it impossible for us to avoid all sin. By sinning we sell the innocence of our eternal spirit in exchange for what the sin provides.

When a woman first commits fornication she sells her virginity for whatever that sin gives her, and she can never regain it. When Adam first sinned he sold his innocence and he could never regain it. When each of us first sins we sell ourselves under sin; we sell our innocence for whatever the sin gives us, and we can never regain it. And as long as we are in this body of flesh, like Paul we are sold under sin. We can have our eternal spirit redeemed (bought back) by Jesus, but our body is incurably defiled, defiled beyond what it was when we were born. And once we sin our body becomes sold under sin. Therefore, like Paul we cannot completely overcome the sin within us.

When Paul wrote of his own flesh he called it, **"the body of this death"** (Romans 7:24). He did not hate his body (see Ephesians 5:25), but he did condemn it as being corrupted. For he said it was a body which was **"captive in the law of sin"** (Romans 7:23). He said, **"I know that good does not dwell in me, that is, in my flesh"** (Romans 7:18), because his flesh was under **"the law of sin, which is in my body-parts"** (Romans 7:23) which forced him to do things against his will. For he said, **"I of myself in the mind indeed serve a law of God, but in the flesh a law of sin"** (Romans 7:25). And so there was a battle within him—a war of wills—for he said, **"I see a different law in my body-parts, warring against the law of my mind, and taking me captive in the law of sin, which is in my body-parts"** (Romans 7:23).

Here is how he described his inner struggle: **"For we know that the law is spiritual, but I am carnal, having been sold under sin. For I do not understand what I do, for I do not do this that I want, but what I hate, this I do. But if I do this that I do not want, I agree with the law that it is good. But now I no longer perform it, but the sin dwelling in me. For I know that good does not dwell in me, that is, in my flesh, for to will is present in me, but to do the good, I find not. For I do not do good that I want, instead, wrong that I do not want, this I do. But if I do this that I do not want, I no longer perform it, but sin dwelling in me.**

"Consequently I find the law in my wanting to do good, that evil is present in me. For I delight in the law of God according to the inner man, but I see a different law in my body-parts, warring against the law of my mind, and taking me captive in the law of sin, which is in my body-parts. I am a wretched man. Who will rescue me out of the body of this death? I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then, I of myself in the mind indeed serve a law of God, but in the flesh a law of sin. Consequently nothing is condemnation now to those in Christ Jesus, who walk not according to flesh but according to Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus freed me from the law of sin and of death" (Romans 7:14-8:2).

Paul did not state anything specific when he said, **"... wrong that I do not want, this I do."** He referred to his entire body, which, he said, was a **"body of this death,"** because it is **"captive in the law of sin."** Paul was so full of zeal and love for God that he never wanted to do anything wrong. Yet he could not avoid it, and this grieved him. Now remember, he was not referring to willful sins such as those mentioned in the ten commandments. Those have been and always will be subject to our control, to willfully commit or not.

Paul's failure to avoid doing wrong was not unique to him; it is common to all men. For example, I do wrong unwittingly in many ways. When I write, I do not like to misspell. Yet sometimes I do. I spill milk and bump other people. Sometimes I even sin against my own body by stubbing my toe or cutting my finger. It is not that I *want* to do these things. It is the law of sin within me, and not in me only, but in all men (except for Christ who never became captive to the law of sin).

And so we exist in a morally corrupted body captive in the law of sin. This may have been why Jesus referred to his own faithful disciples as "evil" when he said, **"If ye therefore, being evil, know to give good gifts to your children, how much more your Father in the heavens will give good things to those who ask him?**" (Matthew 7:11).

Those who surrender to their flesh become lost and without hope, whose end is the second death (see Revelation 2:11 and 20:14). Those of us who confess our sins, and repent of them, trusting and obeying Christ Jesus, are cleansed by him. Even those whose sins are serious can be cleansed, for Paul said, **"Or know ye not that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not led astray. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate men, nor homosexuals, nor greedy men, nor thieves, nor drunkards, nor the slanderous, nor the predatory will inherit the kingdom of God. And some of you were these things, but ye were washed, but ye were sanctified, but ye were made righteous in the name of the Lord Jesus, and in the Spirit of our God"** (First Corinthians 6:9-11).

And God's touching plea to the ancient Israelites is just as applicable to men today: **"Wash you, make you clean, put away the evil of your doings from before my eyes. Cease to do evil. Learn to do good. Seek justice, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow. Come now, and let us reason together, says Jehovah, though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow. Though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool"** (Isaiah 1:16-18).

Nevertheless, as long as we are in this body of flesh, even those of us who accept the atoning grace of our Lord Jesus remain handicapped in our struggle against sin. For once having sinned we become **"captive in the law of sin."** Remember, even after Paul was called to be an apostle of Jesus Christ, in spite of all his zeal for righteousness, Paul confessed that he sometimes failed in his struggle, doing what he did not want, because he was **"captive in the law of sin."** And such is true of us all.

LIVING FOR THE FLESH

The word "flesh" sometimes refers specifically to our body, and sometimes it is used more broadly, to refer both to our flesh and to the worldly aspects of our extended self. For example, when Paul was forced to defend himself to his brothers in Corinth, he said, **"Since many boast according to the flesh, I too will boast"** (2 Corinthians 11:18). He then went on to describe many things about himself besides his body; things that were part of his entire material being. For example, he mentioned things such as his ancestry, his service to Christ, his many sufferings, his love for others, his power and authority.

In its most general sense, the word "flesh" as used in the Bible appears to refer to an entire way of life. Thus, living according to the flesh typically means living a life based upon purely earthly things, which is sometimes called materialism. As Paul said, **"… those who are in flesh cannot please God"** (Romans 8:8). Not meaning, of course, all men on earth, but those who live only by their earthly being (of which their physical body is the major part). Which is something all men have been guilty of (more or less), as Paul said, **"Among whom we also all once behaved in the lusts of our flesh, doing the intentions of the flesh and of the thoughts, and were by nature children of wrath as also the others"** (Ephesians 2:3).

However, Paul went on to add these encouraging words about his fellow Christians: **"But God, being rich in mercy, through his great love that he loved us, even us being dead in the transgressions, he made alive together with the Christ (ye are saved by grace), and raised us up together, and seated us together in the heavenly things in Christ Jesus. So that in the coming ages he might show the transcending wealth of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus"** (Ephesians 2:4-7). Therefore, Paul urged us not to live a life committed to gratifying our earthly being, but to live a life committed to the noble qualities of piety; that is, not to be led by the flesh, but by the Spirit of God: **"But I say, walk in the Spirit and ye will, no, not fulfill a lust of flesh"** (Galatians 5:16).

Remember, those who are led by the flesh cannot please God, because a life of earthly gratification leads to decadence: **"For those who are according to flesh think about the things of the flesh, but those according to the Spirit the things of the Spirit. For the mentality of the flesh is death, but the mentality of the Spirit is life and peace. Because the mentality of the flesh is enmity against God, for it is not submissive to the law of God, for neither is it able. And those who are in flesh cannot please God"** (Romans 8:5-8).

Indeed, a worldly life is in diametrical opposition to a life of piety, as Paul said, **"For the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh; for these are opposed to each other, to prevent you from doing what you would"** (Galatians 5:17). Paul emphasized the difference even further, saying that a worldly life is hostile to God: **"Because the mentality of the flesh is enmity against God, for it is not submissive to the law of God, for neither is it able. And those who are in flesh cannot please God"** (Romans 8:7-8). This is a corrupt world because of sin, and our flesh is also

corrupt. And, as Paul said, those of us who have been born again of the spirit must struggle against the evil impulses, appetites, and ambitions of our flesh which war against our spirit. Remember his words: **"For I delight in the law of God according to the inner man, but I see a different law in my body-parts, warring against the law of my mind …"** (Romans 7:22-23).

Those who choose to live a life of earthly gratification orient their minds to that end. Their actions are not governed by the values of piety, but on earthly values and worldly standards of conduct. And many things that are acceptable to men are sinful to God. Of course, there are as many varieties of sinners as there are kinds of animals in the world. Some are predators—roaring lions, crafty foxes, sneaky vipers; they will receive the greater damnation (see Matthew 23). Some are parasites. Many are gentle sheep who have a good conscience, but have foolishly gone astray into worldliness. Some who were formerly sheep have become predators. Some are wolves in sheep's clothing. Communities and nations also vary similarly in their character, some being more righteous and others being more wicked.

All can be identified by what their lives produce. For when Jesus warned about false prophets, he said, **"But beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly are predatory wolves. From their fruits ye will know them. Do they gather grapes from thorns, or figs from thistles? Likewise every good tree produces good fruits, but the corrupt tree produces bad fruits. A good tree cannot produce bad fruits, nor a corrupt tree produce good fruits. Every tree not producing good fruit is cut down, and thrown into the fire. So then from their fruits ye will know them"** (Matthew 7:15-20).

Begotten Again

Nevertheless, there are always a few of us who seek a higher plane, the noble life of piety, because we love truth and righteousness. Therefore, we reject the corrupt values and goals of the world. Those with humble hearts, who love truth and God's laws of righteousness more that the spiritual darkness of the world, will hearken to the words of Jesus and will follow him. We are attracted to the light of his truth to guide our way. For John said, **"We are of God. He who knows God hears us. He who is not of God does not hear us. From this we know the spirit of truth, and the spirit of error"** (First John 4:6).

And Jesus is the true light of men, as John testified when he said, **"He was the true light coming into the world that enlightens every man. He was in the world, and the world came to be through him, and the world knew not him. He came to his own, and his own did not accept him. But as many as did accept him, to them he gave power to become children of God, to those who believe in his name, who were begotten, not from blood, nor from a will of flesh, nor from a will of man, but from God"** (John 1:9-13).

Therefore, we who love truth and righteousness listen to Jesus and follow him, for he said, **"My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me. And I give them eternal life, and they will, no, not perish into the age, and not any will snatch them out of my hand"** (John 10:27-28). And again he said, **"Every man who is of the truth hears my**

voice" (John 18:37). And when Jesus was disputing with the unbelieving Jews, he told them, **"He who is of God hears the sayings of God. Because of this ye do not hear, because ye are not of God"** (John 8:47). And for those of us who hearken to him, Jesus gives us power to rise from sons of disobedience to become sons of God, having our spirit renewed.

Being begotten again is a great mystery, but Jesus explained a little about it when he spoke with Nicodemus, a teacher and ruler of the Jews. The record says, **"Jesus answered and said to him, Truly, truly, I say to thee, If any man is not begotten from above, he cannot see the kingdom of God. Nicodemus says to him, How can a man be begotten, being old? Can he enter a second time into his mother's belly, and be born? Jesus answered, Truly, truly, I say to thee, If any man is not begotten from water and Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is begotten from the flesh is flesh, and that which is begotten from the Spirit is spirit. Marvel not that I said to thee, ye must be begotten from above. The wind blows where it will, and thou hear the sound of it, but know not from where it comes, and where it goes. So is every man who is begotten from the Spirit"** (John 3:3-8).

Thus, we must **"be begotten from water and Spirit."** Being begotten of water refers to the rite of immersion—a brief burial in water, then rising up from it. For Paul said, **"Or are ye ignorant that as many as were immersed into Christ Jesus were immersed into his death? We were buried therefore with him through the immersion into death, so that as Christ was raised up from the dead through the glory of the Father, so also we may walk in newness of life"** (Romans 6:3-4). Being begotten from the Spirit is more mysterious. Somehow during the process of immersion we are transformed by the Spirit of God into a new spiritual creature, being **"begotten from the Spirit"** to **"walk in newness of life."** As Paul said, **"For ye are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. For as many as were immersed into Christ have put on Christ"** (Galatians 3:26-27).

Of course, it is not our body that changes, but our invisible spirit. Hence, we have no consciousness of that mysterious change. Nevertheless, we do become a new creation in spirit, as Paul said: **"So then if any man is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old things have passed away, behold, all things have become new"** (2 Corinthians 5:17). Jesus compared the creation of our new spiritual being with the wind which cannot be seen but only heard. Likewise the spirit is invisible, and can only be noticed by the change it makes in a man's life.

Peter also wrote about our new birth when he encouraged us to love each other, saying, **"Ye should love each other fervently from a pure heart, begotten again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, through the word of God that lives and remains into the age"** (First Peter 1:22-23). Thus, in obedience to the knowledge we have of the word of God, disciples of Christ have been begotten again of an incorruptible seed, which is the Holy Spirit of God.

Paul likewise wrote about the renewing of our spirit. Remember, when we are first born into the world, we inherit an innocent spirit from what was breathed into Adam by God. But

when we sin we defile that spirit. And so, apparently when we believe Christ and obey his command to be begotten of water (the rite of immersion), God's Holy Spirit then renews the once innocent spirit that we inherited from Adam, which we had defiled by sin.

Speaking of this regeneration and renewal, Paul said, **"For we also were formerly foolish, disobedient, being led astray, serving various lusts and pleasures, living in evil and envy, hateful, hating each other. But when the kindness and philanthropy of God our Savior appeared, he saved us, not of works in righteousness that we did, but according to his mercy through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit, which he poured out upon us abundantly, through Jesus Christ our Savior"** (Titus 3:3-6).

And having been begotten again, because of the redemptive blood of Jesus Christ, then our spirit is continually cleansed. For the apostle John said, **"And this is the message that we have heard from him and declare to you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with him and walk in the darkness, we lie, and do not the truth. But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with each other, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanses us from every sin. If we say that we have no sin, we lead ourselves astray, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and righteous so that he will forgive us our sins, and cleanse us from every unrighteousness"** (First John 1:5-9).

Our spirit is continually cleansed, because **"the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanses us from every sin."** That is, as long as we have fellowship with him by walking in his light. And so, let no man think that he could then return to a sinful life, and not be condemned with the rest of the world. For John also said, **"Little children, let no man lead you astray. He who is doing righteousness is righteous, just as that man is righteous. He who is doing sin is of the devil, because the devil sinned from the beginning. The Son of God was made known for this, so that he might destroy the works of the devil"** (First John 3:7-8). And the writer of the book of Hebrews warned: **"For when we sin willfully after taking the knowledge of the truth, there remains no more a sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful expectation of judgment and of fire, a fervor that is going to devour the opposition"** (Hebrews 10:26-27).

Dead to the Flesh

Before we can be buried and reborn, however, we must first die. For immersion is not a death, it is a burial. Of course, in this case death is not physical but spiritual. What must die is our former manner of thinking and living. We must repent and turn away from the selfish orientation of our flesh. We must put to death our worldly life, as Paul said, **"For if ye live according to flesh, ye are going to die, but if in spirit ye kill the deeds of the body, ye will live"** (Romans 8:13). And Jesus said, **"He who finds his life will lose it, and he who loses his life because of me will find it"** (Matthew 10:39).

We must, like Jesus, volunteer to be crucified, for Jesus said, **"If any man wants to come behind me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me"** (Matthew

16:24). We must be like Paul, and say, **"I have been crucified with Christ, and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. And what I now live in flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God who loved me and gave himself up for me"** (Galatians 2:20).

We must figuratively crucify this body of flesh, to destroy its power over us (over our willfulness), so that we can be freed from sin, no longer to live willfully in service to the sinful pleasures of this life. But rather, as sons of God, to walk a new life of unselfish devotion to him. This death occurs when we have a change of heart away from a life of worldliness. It involves a willful conversion within our mind; a reorientation away from living a life according to the flesh to a life for God. This is the process that destroys our old worldly life. It can only happen by our own willpower. Moreover, it is a process of the heart, not something done externally, and it includes repentance.

The Bible teaches that we are saved by faith. However, contrary to popular belief, salvation is a process, and not something that occurs once in a man's life. Salvation becomes complete only after our earthly body dies. It begins with faith and is maintained by it, but faith alone is not enough. Faith is necessary but not sufficient for salvation. Faith is the foundation but not the whole. For James said that faith is perfected with works. Speaking of Abraham he said, **"Thou see that faith was working with his works, and from the works, faith was fully perfected"** (James 2:22).

Those who teach instant eternal salvation by faith only, give people an excuse to disobey. That makes them popular with men but not with God. As Paul said, **"For do I now trust men or God? Or do I seek to please men? For if I were still pleasing men I would not be a bondman of Christ"** (Galatians 1:10). And such teachers are going to face God's wrath on the great day of judgment, unless they repent.

We are saved by faith in Christ because, Peter said, **"salvation is not in any other man, for there is no other name under the heaven, that has been given among men, by which we must be saved"** (Acts 4:12). Moreover, faith in him is what makes us willing to change our lives, to voluntarily crucify our old life and die to the world in hopes of living again with a better life in a better world. Thus, we submit to burial in the watery grave of immersion in obedience to Jesus' command. For remember, Jesus told Nicodemus that no man can enter the kingdom of God unless he is **"begotten from water and Spirit."** Elsewhere he said, **"He who believes and is immersed will be saved, but he who does not believe will be damned"** (Mark 16:16).

It is our voluntary obedience to burial in water that symbolizes this death of our former life of the flesh. This also serves as evidence to others that we have put to death our old selves. And, through our willful submission to this watery burial, God resurrects us into eternal life through a new spiritual birth. For Jesus said, **"Truly, truly, I say to you, if any man keeps my word, he will, no, not see death, into the age"** (John 8:51). And Paul said, **"We were buried therefore with him through the immersion into death, so that as Christ was raised up from the dead through the glory of the Father, so also we may walk in newness of life. For if we have become co-planted in the likeness of his death, then we will also be of the resurrection.**

"Knowing this, that our old man was crucified with him, so that the body of sin might be inactivated, no longer to enslave us to sin. For he who has died has been made righteous away from sin. And if we died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him, knowing that Christ, having been raised from the dead, dies no more" (Romans 6:4-9).

Notice, Paul said that commitment to Christ crucifies our old self so that **"the body of sin might be inactivated"** (that is, our worldly life), and we should **"walk in newness of life"** no longer being enslaved to sin. Meaning, we should no longer *willfully* sin, although we cannot completely escape the law of sin within our bodies that keeps us from being faultless.

Thus Paul admonished us to live righteously, telling us to **"put off the old man according to your former conduct, the man who is corrupt according to the desires of deceitfulness, and to be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and to put on the new man according to God, the man who was created in righteousness and piety of the truth"** (Ephesians 4:22-24). And in another place he said, **"I beseech you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this age, but be ye transformed by the renewal of your mind, for ye to approve what is the good and acceptable and perfect will of God"** (Romans 12:1-2).

Led by the Spirit

We must be dead to the flesh and alive to God in our spirit. And that means we must be led by his Spirit. For Paul said, **"So then, brothers, we are debtors, not to the flesh to live according to flesh. For if ye live according to flesh, ye are going to die, but if in spirit ye kill the deeds of the body, ye will live. For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God"** (Romans 8:12-14). Paul said that after we have put off the old corrupt way of life, we need to build another life from the renewed spirit that is within our being; a new life patterned after the image of God, created in righteousness and purity of living. He said, **"… having put on the new man, being renewed in knowledge according to an image of him who created him"** (Colossians 3:10).

Hence, our renewal is a continual growth process, which begins with our repentance and the reorientation of our hearts when we accept Jesus as our Lord and savior. And it will take some time, more or less for different individuals, for we all begin as babes in Christ. It is unrealistic to think that we are born fully mature in the spirit. For Peter spoke of "newborn babes" in Christ when he encouraged us: **"Ye should love each other fervently from a pure heart, begotten again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, through the word of God that lives and remains into the age. Because all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as a flower of grass. The grass withers, and the flower of it falls away, but the word of the Lord endures into the age.**

"And this is the word, the good news that was preached to you. Therefore, having put off all evil and all deceit and hypocrisies and envies and all evil speaking, as newborn

babes, long for the genuine intellectual milk, so that ye may grow by it, if indeed ye have tasted that the Lord is excellent" (First Peter 1:23-2:2).

Moreover, while we live in this world, we still exist in the flesh, in **"the body of this death"** as Paul spoke of it. Therefore, growing in the spirit includes a continual struggle with our flesh, which wars against our spirit. Paul himself said, **"But I give my body a black eye and subdue it, lest somehow having preached to others, I myself might become disqualified"** (First Corinthians 9:27). In this sense putting to death the old corrupt self is a continuing process. It is, as Paul said, a **"living sacrifice."**

Thus, being sons of God involves a lifetime of both rejecting sin and pursuing righteousness, as Paul said: **"So also ye, reckon yourselves to be indeed dead to sin, but living to God in Christ Jesus our Lord. Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body in order to obey it, in its lusts. And do not present your body-parts as instruments of unrighteousness to sin, but present yourselves to God, as living out of the dead, and your body-parts as instruments of righteousness to God"** (Romans 6:11-13).

And remember, unless we carry through on our commitment, walking in his light, allowing God's Spirit to guide us away from sin to righteousness, we will not only fail to grow, but we will eventually die. For remember, Paul warned his Christian brothers in Rome they could still be lost: **"So then, brothers, we are debtors, not to the flesh to live according to flesh. For if ye live according to flesh, ye are going to die, but if in spirit ye kill the deeds of the body, ye will live"** (Romans 8:12-13).

Paul reminded his brothers in Rome that they had died to their old life of sin, and were now living to God in Christ: **"So also ye, reckon yourselves to be indeed dead to sin, but living to God in Christ Jesus our Lord"** (Romans 6:11). And he said to his brothers in Colossae, **"If therefore ye were raised with the Christ, seek the things above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. Think on the things above, not the things on the earth. For ye died, and your life has been hidden with the Christ in God. When the Christ, our life, is made known, then ye also will be made known with him in glory"** (Colossians 3:1-4). With the loss of our worldly life, for the cause of Christ, we gain a new glorious life for eternity. For the spirit of God and of Christ dwells in us since we have **"received the spirit of adoption"** and are now **"children of God."**

Paul gave more detail about this process, when he said, **"So also ye, reckon yourselves to be indeed dead to sin, but living to God in Christ Jesus our Lord. Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body in order to obey it, in its lusts. And do not present your body-parts as instruments of unrighteousness to sin, but present yourselves to God, as living out of the dead, and your body-parts as instruments of righteousness to God, for sin will not have dominion over you. For ye are not under law, but under grace.**

"What then? May we sin, because we are not under law but under grace? May it not happen! Know ye not, that to what ye present yourselves as bondmen for obedience, ye are bondmen to what ye obey, whether of sin for death, or of obedience for righteousness? But thanks to God, that ye were bondmen of sin, but ye obeyed from the

heart a model of doctrine for which ye were delivered. And having been set free from sin, ye were made servile to righteousness (I speak man-like because of the weakness of your flesh).

"For as ye presented your body-parts servile to uncleanness, and to lawlessness for lawlessness, so now present your body-parts servile to righteousness for sanctification. For when ye were bondmen of sin, ye were uninhibited by righteousness. What fruit therefore did ye have then, of which things ye are now ashamed? For the end of those things is death. But now having been made free from sin, and having become servile to God, ye have your fruit for sanctification, and the end, eternal life" (Romans 6:11-22).

The bondage to sin that Paul is talking about in the above passage refers to willfully living according to the flesh, which makes a man employ his body **"servile to uncleanness, and to lawlessness for lawlessness."** But when we willfully die to sin, and are begotten again, we are to use our renewed spirit willfully to employ our bodies **"servile to righteousness for sanctification."**

When Paul was talking about going from bondmen of sin to being servile to righteousness, **"having been set free from sin,"** he was not talking about the law of sin that we are all in bondage to. That kind of bondage is what causes our flesh to sin unwittingly. Christ freed our spirit from the law of sin and of death, as this passage says: **"For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus freed me from the law of sin and of death"** (Romans 8:2). However, our body of flesh remains sold under sin and bound to it, as Paul said: **"I am carnal, having been sold under sin"** (Romans 7:14).

Our body will always be controlled by the law of sin, but not our mind. If our mind is controlled by the law of Christ, then our sins will only be unwitting sins of the flesh. For as disciples of Christ, the nature of our spirit will **"delight in the law of God according to the inner man ..."** (Romans 7:22). We become like Paul, who said, **"I of myself in the mind indeed serve a law of God, but in the flesh a law of sin"** (Romans 7:25).

Thus, if we are authentic disciples of Christ, then our spirit is no longer committed to the flesh but to the Spirit (of God); we are no longer in flesh but in Spirit. Consequently, we receive the promise of eternal life with Christ, being adopted children of God. As Paul said, **"But ye are not in flesh but in Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. But if any man does not have the Spirit of Christ, this man is not of him. And if Christ is in you, the body is indeed dead because of sin, but the Spirit is life because of righteousness. But if the Spirit of him who raised up Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised up the Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit that dwells in you.**

"So then, brothers, we are debtors, not to the flesh to live according to flesh. For if ye live according to flesh, ye are going to die, but if in spirit ye kill the deeds of the body, ye will live. For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God. For ye did not receive a spirit of bondage again for fear, but ye received a spirit of adoption,

whereby we cry, Abba, Father. The Spirit itself testifies with our spirit, that we are children of God. And if children, also heirs, heirs indeed of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if indeed we suffer jointly, so that we may also be glorified jointly" (Romans 8:9-17).

Our Perfection

One great day our perfection will come, for Jesus has purified our spirits by his atoning sacrifice. Moreover, we will be given new bodies of holiness, as Paul also said: **"For our citizenship exists in the heavens, from which also we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform the body of our lowliness, in order for it to become similar in form to the body of his glory, according to the working of his power even to subject all things to himself"** (Philippians 3:20-21). Moreover, in that new world, the congregation of his sanctified—those whom Christ, the Son of God, purchased with his own blood—will be glorified with him. For Jesus himself said, **"He who overcomes, I will give him to sit with me in my throne, as I also overcame, and sat down with my Father in his throne"** (Revelation 3:21)

However, mercy will only be for those who accept Christ. John spoke that truth with these beautiful words: **"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, so that every man who believes in him would not perish, but have eternal life. For God sent the Son into the world not that he might condemn the world, but that the world might be saved through him. He who believes in him is not condemned. He who does not believe has been condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God"** (John 3:16-18).

I must point out that although we are taught to grow in the spirit, we are not penalized if that growth cannot happen because of lack of time. That is taught in this parable of Jesus: **"For the kingdom of the heavens is compared to a man, a house-ruler, who went out in the early morning at the same time to hire workmen for his vineyard. And having agreed with the workmen for a denarius a day, he sent them into his vineyard. And having gone out about the third hour, he saw others having stood idle in the marketplace. And he said to those men, Go ye also into the vineyard, and whatever would be right I will give you, and they went. Again having gone out about the sixth and the ninth hour, he did likewise. And having gone out about the eleventh hour, he found others who have stood idle. And he says to them, Why have ye stood here idle the whole day? They say to him, Because no man has hired us. He says to them, Go ye also into the vineyard, and whatever would be right ye will receive.**

"And having become evening, the lord of the vineyard says to his manager, Call the workmen, and render to them their wage, having begun from the last until the first. And those who came about the eleventh hour, each received a denarius. But when the first came, they supposed that they would receive more. And they also received a denarius each. And when they received it, they murmured against the house-ruler, saying, These last did one hour, and thou have made them equal to us, who have borne the

burden of the day and the heat. But having answered, he said to one of them, Friend, I do thee no wrong. Did thou not agree with me for a denarius? Take thine and go. But I want to give to this last man, as to thee also. Is it not permitted for me to do what I want with my own? Is thine eye evil, because I am good? So the last will be first, and the first last, for many are called, but few chosen" (Matthew 20:1-16). Do not fear, therefore, if you have less time in your life to grow in spirit. Our perfection will come in the great afterlife that God has promised us.

Incidentally, if you think the lord of the vineyard in that parable was unjust to reward equally those who worked just a fewer hours, then consider this: Those men were outside hoping someone would hire them; they wanted to work. And for many such men, not being able to earn anything is more troublesome than the labor of working. They may have had worries about not being able to feed their families, while the men who worked all day were secure in the knowledge they were going to be paid.

Of course, we cannot infer rules from such a parable about how to pay workmen. Every situation needs to be judged as the circumstances indicate. And disciples of Christ are under the law of liberty to do what they think is expedient. Nevertheless always remember, God sees far more than we see, and everything he does is right and good. Trust him!

A New Body

When our body of flesh dies, we as sons of God will be given new bodies that will never die. Jesus told about this when he spoke about marriage and the resurrection from the dead. He said, **"The sons of this age marry, and are given in marriage, but those who are considered worthy to attain to that age, and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry, nor are given in marriage. For neither can they die any more, for they are like the agents, and are sons of God, being sons of the resurrection"** (Luke 20:34-36).

Paul also wrote about this, contrasting our present body of flesh with our future body in heaven. He said that although our flesh weakens and dies, our inner man, that is our spirit, is continually renewed. Indeed, he said that our suffering in this life is slight compared with the glory we will have in heaven, and we have a dwelling from God to clothe our spirit that is eternal there: **"Therefore we are not discouraged, but even if the outer man of us is perishing, yet the inner man is renewed day by day. For our slight momentary affliction works for us an eternal weight of glory from extraordinariness to extraordinariness, while we look not at things seen, but at things not seen. For things seen are temporal, but things not seen are eternal.**

"For we know that if the earthly house of our tent were destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made by hands, eternal in the heavens. For also in this we groan, longing to clothe ourselves with our habitation from heaven, if indeed also having put it on we will not be found naked. For also those who are in the tent groan, being burdened, not in that we want to undress, but to clothe ourselves, so that the mortal may be swallowed up by the life" (Second Corinthians 4:16-5:4).

Indeed, John said that we are going to be like the Son of God himself: **"Beloved, now we are children of God, and it is not yet made known what we will be. But we know that whenever he is made known we will be like him, because we will see him as he is"** (First John 3:2). Paul also said the same thing when he wrote to the Philippian brothers: **"For our citizenship exists in the heavens, from which also we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform the body of our lowliness, in order for it to become similar in form to the body of his glory, according to the working of his power even to subject all things to himself"** (Philippians 3:20-21). And our new heavenly body will never be captive to the law of sin.

Part 4:4

THE LAW OF CHRIST

Disciples of Christ have been redeemed from being condemned with the devil and those who have chosen his ways. And we are now part of the new covenant of God, which has made us free. We are no longer subject to a legal system with him, to be judged by his laws of righteousness. For we are now sons of God free from law, and will inherit the unimaginably wonderful blessings of eternal life with him in his new heaven and earth. Until that time, however, we must continue our struggle against the evil impulses of our bodies. As Paul said, we must be men **"who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit"** (Romans 8:1). When Paul said walk he used the word figuratively, meaning the way we should live our lives.

Jesus told his disciples, **"If any man wants to come behind me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me"** (Matthew 16:24). Those too are figurative words, where following Jesus means accepting his leadership and obeying him. Thus, the way of Christ is like a journey where we follow behind him, walking not according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit of God.

In the Bible a man's life is often compared to a journey, and the way he lives is like walking a path or following a route. For each of us there are many different ways we can live, or "paths to follow," but in God's sight they can all be classified into one of two general directions: the way of righteousness, and the way of sin. Righteousness is the way of life that leads upward. Sin is the way of death that leads downward. King Solomon spoke of the pathway of righteousness when he said, **"Life is in the way of righteousness, and in the pathway thereof there is no death"** (Proverbs 12:28). And God's commands in the Bible are like a road map which shows us the pathway of righteousness.

CASUAL WAYS

Many men like to wander from the pathway of righteousness because it is the more difficult way. Therefore, they belittle the importance of the "road map" of the word of God, or they interpret it very loosely. They want to have more freedom to vary. They prefer being looser, more broad-minded, and tolerant, allowing greater diversity. Included in the definition of the adjective *liberal* in Webster's dictionary are the following: "... loose ... broad-minded, tolerant ..." The liberal attitude is to be loose with commandments, more tolerant of deviations, more broad-minded about right and wrong.

Few believers today admit being liberal, but most of them are. It is the broad way of sin which Jesus described, when he said, **"Enter ye in by the narrow gate, because wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leads to destruction, and many are they who enter through it. How narrow is the gate, and restricted the way, that leads to life, and few are those who find it"** (Matthew 7:13-14).

Jesus said the way that leads to life is narrow and restricted, while the way that leads to destruction is broad, wide, and popular. Therefore, those in the church who loosen God's commandments, and teach men so, become popular. They often gain a great following because that way is easy, but they put their souls in jeopardy. To err on the side of permissiveness is the mistake of the modern liberal element; it leads to the erosion of obedience, and it increases conformity to the seductive but corrupt values of the world. That mentality is very appealing and satisfying to our fleshly nature, but it always leads to an eventual falling away from righteousness.

Jesus condemned that approach to living, when he said, **"Think not that I came to abolish the law or the prophets. I came not to abolish, but to fulfill. For truly I say to you, until the heaven and the earth pass away, one iota or one tittle will, no, not pass away from the law, until all things come to pass. Whoever therefore may relax one of these least commandments, and may teach men so, he will be called least in the kingdom of the heavens. But whoever may do and may teach them, this man will be called great in the kingdom of the heavens. For I say to you, that unless your righteousness abounds more than of the scholars and Pharisees, ye will, no, not enter into the kingdom of the heavens"** (Matthew 5:17-20).

When Jesus taught about God's commandments, he *increased* their strictness, he did not loosen them. In machinery, high quality is correlated with narrower tolerance levels. In order to promote a higher degree of spiritual quality within us, Jesus set stricter "tolerance levels." He reminded his disciples that murder brings condemnation, but he then added that any offense against a brother puts a man in danger of condemnation. Likewise, he said that not only was the act of adultery wrong, but even indulging in the thought itself was sin. The great mistake of the liberal approach to living is in having the reverse attitude: when in doubt do the minimum believed necessary. The liberal attitude is in direct opposition to the unpopular stricter approach of Jesus.

Rigid Ways

Now it is natural to ask, is it not possible to interpret commands too strictly? The answer is yes, when doing so defeats the purpose of the command. It is possible to make a path which is too narrow and confining. Men follow paths to get somewhere. If the path is so confining that progress is impeded, then it is too narrow. The lanes of a highway that are only a few inches wider than the width of cars is going to slow traffic to a crawl, and it will cause many more accidents. God's commands are designed to promote righteousness. If his commands are interpreted so narrowly that righteousness is discouraged or defeated, then the interpretation is false to God's will.

The Pharisees often erred in over-strictness with some of God's laws. For example, their rigid, narrow interpretation of what could be done on the sabbath day was a yoke upon the necks of righteous men, making it harder for them to do any good on that day. Jesus rebuked them for their narrowness, saying, **"The sabbath came into being for sake of man, and not man for sake of the sabbath"** (Mark 2:27).

Another example of their over-strictness concerns Moses' laws of cleanliness. They extended them by adding their own traditions which carried the matter of cleanliness to ridiculous extremes. The record says, **"(For the Pharisees, and all the Jews, unless they wash their hands carefully, do not eat, holding the tradition of the elders. And coming from the marketplace, they do not eat unless they bathe. And there are many other things that they have taken in to retain: washings of cups, and pots, and brazen vessels, and beds.) Then the Pharisees and the scholars demand of him, Why do thy disciples not walk according to the tradition of the elders, but eat their bread with unwashed hands?"** (Mark 7:3-5).

Jesus did not condemn the Pharisees for their strictness in obedience to what God really wanted. He condemned them (1) for over-extending God's laws by their traditions, (2) for their hypocrisy, (3) for using narrow legalism to defeat the purpose of God's laws, (4) for their lack of love, and (5) for neglecting the more important commands. Here are some examples of what he said to them:

> **Woe to you, scholars and Pharisees, hypocrites! Because ye tithe the mint and the anise and the cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law—justice and mercy and faith. These things must be done, and not neglecting those things** (Matthew 23:23).
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> **And he says to them, Is it permitted to do good on the sabbath day or to do harm, to save life or to kill? But they were silent. And having looked around on them with anger, being grieved at the callousness of their heart, he says to the man, Stretch forth thy hand. And he stretched it out, and his hand was restored as the other** (Mark 3:4-5).
>
> **And having answered, he said to them, Well did Isaiah prophesy about you hypocrites, as it is written, This people honors me with their lips, but their heart is far distant from me. But in vain they worship me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men. For having set aside the commandment of God, ye hold the tradition of men: washings of pots and cups and many other such like things ye do. And he said to them, Well do ye reject the commandment of God, so that ye may keep your tradition. For Moses said, Honor thy father and thy mother, and, He who speaks evil of father or mother, let him perish in death. But ye say, If a man should say to his father or mother, Whatever ye might be benefited from me is Corban, that is, an offering, then ye no longer allow him to do anything for his father or his mother, annulling the word of God by your tradition that ye have delivered. And many such like things ye do** (Mark 7:6-13).

Some of our conservative brothers are acting like modern Pharisees. Which ones are hypocrites, I know not; God knows. But I do know (1) they sometimes over-extend God's laws by their traditions, (2) they sometimes use legalism to defeat the purpose of God's laws, (3) their words are sometimes full of hateful bitterness, and (4) they sometimes neglect the more important parts of God's will.

Off Track

Our liberal brothers are too broad with their views, focusing only upon the "weightier matters," showing justice, mercy, and faith, while "neglecting the others." For example, some of them look upon the New Testament as only a "love letter," not a book with commands. But Jesus promoted strict obedience to even "the least of the commandments." On the other hand, our conservative brothers are too narrow with their views, taking a blind, legalistic approach to the laws of Christ, while often being like the Pharisees, and "neglecting the weightier matters." Too often they **"… strain out the gnat, and swallow the camel"** (Matthew 23:24), as Jesus described it.

It grieves me to admonish my brothers this way, both liberal and conservative. In my defense I quote Paul's words, **"Ye compelled me …"** (Second Corinthians 12:11). I do not enjoy faultfinding. For if I alienate my brothers in Christ, who do I have left? How much more joyful it is to work together harmoniously. How true are the beautiful words which say, **"Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brothers to dwell together in unity!"** (Psalm 133:1). I am only trying to show how both sides have erred. The excessive tolerance of our liberal brothers, and the excessive narrowness of our conservative brothers have both missed the mark, deviating from the true path of righteousness. Thus, neither side has the right to condemn the other. We have virtually all been guilty of misunderstanding when we should be tolerant and when we should be strict.

After studying the "road map" of the word of God for many years I am now an old man. However, I do understand better, and I am writing these things to help you. Therefore, judge ye if what I conclude is faithful to the holy scriptures and my interpretations are true. Be like the men in Berea: **"And the brothers straightaway sent both Paul and Silas away through the night to Berea, who, when they arrived, went into the synagogue of the Jews. But these were more noble than those in Thessalonica, who received the word with all willingness, examining the scriptures daily, if it has these things this way"** (Acts 17:10-11)

The Second Mile

Here now are my conclusions about the issue of looseness and rigidness in following the way of Christ, his pathway of righteousness. In his great sermon on the mount Jesus contrasted his teaching with their old laws and traditions. Among those words, he taught his disciples to promote both justice and goodwill by doing more than what we are required. He said, for example, **"... whoever will draft thee for one mile, go thou with him two"** (Matthew 5:41). The Romans who ruled Israel during the time of Christ apparently had a law that allowed their officials on a journey to draft a man to help him for a mile. It was an imposition for the man being drafted, but not a great one. Jesus' command to go the second mile provides an excellent example with the analogy of life as a journey. It illustrates how we should walk in the Spirit of God.

What Jesus commanded was to go beyond what was required in order to ensure the requirement was satisfied and goodwill was promoted. Walking with that "second mile" attitude

means doing more than our minimum requirements. Jesus even gave us an example when he was immersed. John the immerser said to the Jews, **"I indeed immerse you in water for repentance, but he who comes after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear."** When Jesus came be immersed by him, John said, **"I have need to be immersed by thee, and thou come to me?** Jesus answered, **"Allow it now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness"** (Matthew 3:11-15). Jesus had no need to be immersed for repentance, but he submitted to immersion anyway. Should, therefore, any man reject the immersion commanded by Jesus and his apostles, and teach against it?

To illustrate the second-mile attitude further I will model these words that Paul spoke about faith: **"But the righteousness from faith says thus: Thou should not say in thy heart, Who will ascend into heaven? (that is, to bring Christ down) or, Who will descend into the abyss? (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead)"** (Romans 10:6-7). Similarly, I believe that having the spirit of Christ in us we should not say in our heart, "What is the least I must do that is necessary?", or "If there is any doubt about a command, I will not obey it," but rather, "I will do more than is necessary," and, "If there is any doubt about a command, I will surely obey it."

The many sayings Jesus gave during his sermon on the mount were not designed to simply give us a new list of laws, for without this attitude laws are useless. Many of his sayings were given as illustrations of this vital spirit of the heart. For example, when Jesus spoke of the law of Moses that required equal retribution, he contrasted that command with this new attitude which leads a man to go beyond necessity; he said we should not only fulfill the requirements of law and justice, but also promote love and good-will. He said, **"Ye have heard that it was said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth. But I say to you, not to resist what is troublesome, but whoever will strike thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also. And to the man who wants to sue thee, and take away thy coat, thou shall leave him thy cloak also. And whoever will draft thee for one mile, go thou with him two"** (Matthew 5:38-41).

If you deserve being punished a certain way, offer to take a double dose. If you lose a lawsuit, give more than required. If you are forced by law to do something, work twice as hard. Jesus gave many other illustrations of this attitude in his sermon on the mount. Consider these examples: If a certain act is forbidden, do not even imagine doing it. If a man needs help, but he is your enemy, help him anyway (that does not mean to help a criminal or a wicked man in his evil). If some treasured part of your life causes you to offend God, take no chances, destroy it.

Take no chances with anything you do, instead, "go the second mile." Guarantee that you are doing the right thing by doing even more than you think necessary. Caution is a foundation stone of wisdom, whether spiritual or worldly. Modern airliners have twice as many instruments, radios, and emergency devices as are necessary, even though they add weight and expense. They take no chances, because lives are at stake.

Thus, when we are dealing with the laws of Christ (the number of which are a tiny fraction of the numerous laws of Moses), when we have direct commands given by Jesus himself,

or by any of his representatives in the New Testament, then we must be guided by the spirit of Christ which he taught about in his sermon on the Mount. That attitude of the heart which says, "I will do more than I think is necessary."

On the other hand, different interpretations about examples, and inferences made from various scriptures, should be matters of personal conviction, and not cause for division. Christians can be united together by what is essential; that is, by obeying his direct commands with this "second-mile" attitude. However, all the rest should be considered part of the command which says, **"… work out your own salvation with fear and trembling"** (Philippians 2:12).

This attitude will draw us closer to God by increasing our strict obedience to his commands. Strict obedience is absolutely necessary to please God. A builder is faithful when he strictly follows the blueprints created by the architect. What would you think of a builder who says: "I think I can use less steel reinforcing than the plans call for"? Indeed, if a wise builder has doubts he would use even more reinforcing (if, of course, it did not pose some other risk). Strict obedience to a wise designer's specifications is necessary for success both in the natural realm, and the spiritual realm. And when in doubt we should go beyond what we think is the minimum necessary. This Christ-like attitude will also promote good-will among men by doing more than is required of us.

A Warning

Now for some words of caution. Lest too many burdens be added to those who are zealous for Christ, it is important to know what is essential to begin with before applying this "second-mile" response. For example, God does not expect us to make ourselves poor when we help others. He does not expect us to spend all our spare time attempting to convert others. There is just no substitute for using wisdom and good judgment in all of our decisions. Let no man insist otherwise.

The second-mile attitude should be used to help direct us when we are doubtful about decisions. It should never be used to excess. Jesus commanded to go the second mile, not ten or twenty miles more. As Solomon warned, **"Be not over-righteous, nor show thyself too wise. Why should thou destroy thyself?"** (Ecclesiastes 7:16). I have seen righteous men make that mistake. Moreover, nobody should regress into legalism and insist upon interpreting every application of the "second-mile" principle to mean that we must do exactly double what is commanded in every case. This is a very complex world. Every situation requires a degree of good judgment based upon considering the many possible variables and extenuating circumstances. There is just no substitute for using wisdom and good judgment in all of our decisions. Let no man insist otherwise.

Tolerance Within Righteousness

Compared with the old covenant, Christians enjoy enormous liberty. Nevertheless, our liberty must be used with love and wisdom. For when Paul said all things are lawful, he also added qualifications, saying, **"All things are permitted for me, but not all things are ex-**

pedient. All things are permitted for me, but not all things are constructive" (First Corinthians 10:23). Thus, our liberty should be limited to those things which are advantageous and build up. We should use our freedom creatively to be constructive and helpful, doing that which is beneficial and profitable. We should not abuse our freedom nor misuse it. Paul gave the command, **"For ye, brothers, were called to liberty, only not liberty for an opportunity to the flesh, but be servants to each other through love"** (Galatians 5:13). And Peter commanded, **"As free, and not having your freedom as a cover-up of evil, but as bondmen of God"** (First Peter 2:16).

Now wherever there is great freedom, there will always be great differences in opinions and practices. Of course, we should try to learn what is best for every part of our lives, and teach such things to others. However, we should never create division over opinions; we should allow each brother to live his life in freedom, working out his own salvation. Remember what Paul said about such things: **"One man prefers one day above another, another man prefers every day. Let each man be fully persuaded in his own mind. He who regards the day, regards it for the Lord. And he who does not regard the day, for the Lord he does not regard it. And he who eats, eats for the Lord, for he expresses thanks to God. And he who does not eat, for the Lord he does not eat, and expresses thanks to God"** (Romans 14:5-6).

Paul taught that things such as what we eat or drink, or which days we observe are unimportant to God, as long as we honor him, and give thanks to him in all that we do. If any issue is not about commands, then it falls in the realm of personal opinion, and should be under the law of liberty. He who would condemn his brother, and divide the church about such things, is Pharisaical and an enemy of Christ. If some opinionated man despises his brother because of something outside the realm of commands, that man should be rebuked by the church. If he refuses to listen to reason, the church should expel him. We should not tolerate men who condemn others over issues about opinions; these men should not be welcome in the churches (see Titus 3:10).

God gave us liberty, and he never intended for a quarrelsome man to take it away from us, dictating our behavior. As Paul said, **"For why is my liberty judged by another conscience? If I partake with thankfulness, why am I maligned about which I express thanks?"** (First Corinthians 10:29-30). God takes no pleasure in senseless controversy about opinions, especially when it leads to division.

Paul often argued with many men in order to persuade them about the truth of the new covenant of Jesus Christ. Nevertheless, he also taught these words: **"But shun foolish and uneducated questions, knowing that they breed quarrels. And a bondman of the Lord must not quarrel, but be gentle to all, able to teach, patient, in mildness correcting those who oppose"** (Second Timothy 2:23-25), and, **"But avoid foolish questionings, and genealogies, and contentions, and legal fightings, for they are useless and vain. Shun a factious man after a first and second admonition, knowing that such a man is perverted, and sins, being self-condemned"** (Titus 3:9-11).

When to Sacrifice Liberty

Nevertheless, even though we are under the law of liberty, and all things are lawful for us, remember, Paul said, **"For none of us lives to himself, and no man dies to himself"** (Romans 14:7). And again, he said, **"Let not one man seek that of himself, but each man that of the other"** (First Corinthians 10:24). There is a time when it is very important that we curtail our freedom for the sake of a brother. And that is when our behavior could lead him into temptation, causing him to stumble and sin. Paul commanded against this, saying, **"Do not tear down the work of God because of food. All things indeed are clean, but it is wrong to the man who eats through hindrance. It is good not to eat meats, nor to drink wine, nor in whatever thy brother stumbles against, or is caused to stumble, or becomes weak"** (Romans 14:20-21).

I do not drink wine because many modern Christians think it is sinful. Their belief is so strong that when I was a professor at Harding University a student would be immediately expelled for drinking a glass of wine, even if it was a thousand miles from the campus. Yet I never heard of one being expelled for lying to professors and cheating on tests. Therefore I drink no wine lest it be a hindrance to them. (They may have loosened the penalties of that rule since I was there.)

Restraining our liberty is necessary for those who are spiritually weak. For Paul said, **"But take heed lest somehow this privilege of yours becomes a stumbling-block to those who are weak"** (First Corinthians 8:9). And again, he said, **"Now we the strong ought to bear the weaknesses of the frail, and not to please ourselves. Let each of us please his neighbor for what is good toward edification. For Christ also did not please himself, but as it is written, The reproaches of those who reproached thee fell upon me"** (Romans 15:1-3).

Paul gave warning, saying that weak brothers are often vulnerable to this problem (see First Corinthians 8:9-11). This seems especially true when they are yet **"childlike in Christ"** (First Corinthians 3:1), and their faith has not matured. If they see us, who serve as role-models for them, doing something questionable, then they may become tempted to imitate what they think is not right, and consequently, sin against God by violating their conscience (see Romans 14:23). Paul strictly warned against letting our freedom lead anyone into temptation.

This is another example of the spirit of Christ which (in this case) would say, "I will give up more of my liberty than I think necessary, in order not to lead my brother into temptation while he is yet weak." For Paul said, **"Let us not therefore criticize each other any more, but judge ye this instead, not to place a stumbling block to the brother, or a snare. I know and am persuaded in the Lord Jesus, that nothing is profane by itself, except to him who regards anything to be profane. To that man it is profane. For if thy brother is distressed because of food, thou no longer walk according to love. Do not destroy with thy food that man for whom Christ died.**

"Therefore do not let your good be maligned. For the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. For he who serves Christ in these things is acceptable to God, and approved by men. So then we should pursue the things of peace, and the things of constructiveness for each other. Do not tear down the work of God because of food. All things indeed are clean, but it is wrong to the man who eats through hindrance" (Romans 14:13-21).

Paul was emphatic about the importance of this, and applied it to himself, saying, **"Therefore if food causes my brother to stumble, I will no, not eat meat into the age, so that I may not cause my brother to stumble"** (First Corinthians 8:13). Of course, weak brothers should not remain in weakness. We who are strong should help them to grow stronger, patiently, like a loving mother with her children. For it is the duty of us all to strive to grow stronger until **"we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to a standard of stature of the fullness of the Christ"** (Ephesians 4:13), so that we can use our liberty to its full potential for righteousness.

In Sum

If we let the Spirit of God rule our hearts, and humbly obey Christ's commandments (given by him or by any of his representatives), as we have them recorded in the New Testament, with an attitude which says, "I will do more than the minimum necessary," while extending liberty to our brothers for all the rest, then I believe we will be fulfilling the law of Christ. And I have no doubt that when Christians model the life of Christ in this way, it will increase and greatly strengthen our unity.

An Example: The Church Assembly

Consider the example of how we assemble together in our churches. I have visited about two dozen churches in my area whose worship attendance ranged from fifteen or twenty to over a thousand. All of them met in specially constructed (or altered) buildings. The most popular time of meeting was during Sunday morning, although the hour varied. Some of them had separate Sunday School meetings. One church only held their Sunday School in the morning, with their "worship service" being conducted in the evening. One church met on Saturdays. Most of them held a morning and an evening service. A few of the churches divided their membership on Sunday mornings into two consecutive "worship services," because their building could not accommodate all of them at one time. Many of them held worship services on other days as well, the most popular time being Wednesday evening. Most of the meetings lasted between one and three hours. Most of them relied upon the Bible as their main source of teaching. A few also used other authoritative books from which they taught. Some of them used a standardized book containing rather specific instructions for their worship ritual. Almost all furnished song books.

All of those congregations conducted some form of praying, singing, and preaching/teaching. Some of them observed the Lord's Supper. All of them collected financial contributions. In at least one I heard a woman utter what some claim to be "speaking in tongues," after which the minister interpreted what the Holy Spirit was supposed to have said through

her. I attended the early service of one church where it was announced they were going to "baptize" an infant (by sprinkling) at the second service, which I did not remain to witness.

Every one of the churches allowed women to speak as freely as men, both in classes and in the audience of the general assembly (although in a few of the churches women could not speak as leaders). Most of them employed women in active roles of one kind or another. Many of them appeared to give women full equality with men, including using them in roles such as teaching, preaching, leading prayers and singing.

Many of them made appeals to come forward for repentance at the end of the sermon (a modern tradition known as the altar call), and some engaged in small-group prayer-encouragement sessions near the end of the sermon, often in a prostrate position. Every church, except for the Churches of Christ, also employed mechanical instruments of music during their service, most of which were electronically amplified. All of those with instruments had a piano, and many had an organ. Many also had guitars, drum sets, and synthesizer instruments, usually played as a band. Singing varied from congregational, to choir, to solos. The use of instrumental music varied considerably. For a few, it accompanied most activities; either providing background music for something else, or as the primary activity.

Most had some kind of imaginary image of Christ, and of "angels" and various Bible characters. Most of these images were pictures, but one church had statues. In every church there appeared to be one leading personality—a priest/pastor/minister—with some being more dominant than others. In only a few Sunday School classes was there an opportunity for group discussion.

In every church there was some expression of caring for each other, some much more than others. In every church the people were reverent toward God, and well mannered toward other people. The degree of reverence and/or adoration which they displayed varied from rather formal to somewhat emotional; on occasion some knelt, others stood with their arms uplifted. Feelings appeared to be most intense when band music was played. Feelings appeared to vary from intense but controlled emotion, to a state of rapture causing a few of them to jump up and down, and/or shake their heads and slap their hands together. I judged none of this to be excessive in the churches I visited. I saw no display of any kind of disorder in any of the meetings I attended.

The members of the church which displayed the greatest formal reverence to God (kneeling, bowing, quiet solemnity), wore the most casual clothing, and were least expressive of their feelings toward God and others. In every church the people were courteous and friendly, some more than others. No expression of ill-will was ever made to me. As a rule, the smaller the church, the more friendly they seemed.

In their manner of assembly, all of these followers of Christ were obedient to some of his commands. They were, of course, obedient to his command not to forsake assembling themselves together. They were also obedient by engaging in prayer, in singing, and in teaching. They were obedient, more or less, in worshiping God with reverence, and in

showing love toward others. For those who observed the Lord's Supper, most were more or less reverent. All financial contributions were properly voluntary.

However, all of these churches were disobedient to some of Christ's commands. All were disobedient to the command forbidding women to speak. All were disobedient to the command for women to keep their heads covered in prayer. Although I did find one pious woman who covered her head with a lace shawl for the purpose of obeying that command. Most were disobedient to the command forbidding women to engage in leadership roles and to teach men.

The church where "speaking in tongues" was claimed failed to test the spirits to see if they are from God. True speaking in tongues no longer occurs. The power to speak unlearned foreign languages (like all miraculous gifts of the Holy Spirit) was given temporarily during the time when the church was just beginning, in order to help confirm the truth of the new covenant of Christ for unbelievers (see First Corinthians 14).

The church which "baptized" the infant violated two of Christ's commands: First, they were doing this with a non-believer, and second, they failed to properly immerse in water. Those churches that displayed images (in one form or another) which they claimed were of Christ and other Bible characters were being deceitful, because no one knows how Jesus or any other Bible character looked.

Most violated, more or less, the command that singing be used as a means of teaching and admonishing each other. Either the high volume instrumental music overpowered the song service, and drowned out the words people uttered, or the singing was so feeble that the music of the instruments became the focus of attention. The only exception to not being able to hear the words of the song concerned those who had microphones to amplify their voices; they were usually heard. However, even those churches not using instruments sometimes employed excessively loud singing, often with fancy vocalizations which, like instruments, certainly added to the sensual beauty of the music (some of which was very moving), but nevertheless it often distracted from what the words were saying.

In the general assembly of all of the churches a few persons dominated the speaking, with one person doing most to the teaching/preaching. Nobody else in the assembly was invited to say anything.

Commands for the assembly

Now how can the "second-mile" spirit of Christ, and his law of liberty be used to reconcile us in these examples of how we assemble together as churches for worship? Of course, we first need to know what the specific commands of Christ are which apply. Listed below are the ones I have found, based upon commands given in these scriptures: Acts 2; Romans 12 and 16; First Corinthians 1, 5, 11, and 14; Colossians 3; First Timothy 2; Hebrews 10 and 12.

- Accept into brotherhood those who confess faith in Jesus, repent of their sins, and are immersed.
- Do not forsake assembling together.

- Worship God our heavenly Father, and his Son, Jesus Christ, with reverence.
- Teach the word of God.
- Sing songs for the purpose of teaching and admonishing each other.
- Allow all men who are qualified to interpret and expound the word of God to speak during the assembly, beginning with two or three, "one by one."
- Pray.
- Observe the Lord's Supper with reverence.
- Accept God's will for women to be subordinate.
- Women are forbidden to speak in the assembly, to teach men, and to have any kind of leadership over men.
- Women are commanded to keep their heads covered during prayer as a sign of their submissiveness.
- Show love toward each other and toward others.
- Kiss each other with a holy kiss.
- Rebuke those who sin.
- Have no party spirit, which includes not belonging to denominations.

Regarding the opportunity of all men to speak in their assemblies, Paul said, **"And let two or three men who have the word of God speak, and let the other men pass judgment. But if it should be revealed to another man who is seated, let the first be silent. For ye can all proclaim the word of God one by one, so that all may learn, and all may be encouraged. And the spirits of men who proclaim the word of God are subject to men who proclaim the word of God, for God is not a God of confusion, but of peace"** (First Corinthians 14:29-33).

I have heard many sermons that contained errors of one kind or another, yet neither I nor any other man in the assembly was allowed to voice an objection or a correction. That is not the way Paul commanded us to learn about the word of God in our assemblies. For he said, **"... ye can all proclaim the word of God one by one, so that all may learn, and all may be encouraged."** Every knowledgeable man in the assembly should be able to share his knowledge about the word of God. Yet that is never done.

As we listen to other men, useful and insightful interpretations and other thoughts often arise in our hearts by our own thinking, and they should be shared for mutual upbuilding. If such thoughts are erroneous or inapplicable then it is the duty of the other knowledgeable men in the assembly to make corrections, because **"the spirits of men who proclaim the word of God are subject to men who proclaim the word of God."**

The failure to allow other men to speak during the church assemblies is a major cause of spiritual stagnation among Christians. Preventing other men to speak ensures a peaceful and tranquil service, but it retards the spiritual growth of the whole congregation. One of the things that helped Paul promote the good news of Christ was the Jewish practice of inviting men to speak during their synagogue meetings. Here is an example from the book of Acts: **"And after the reading of the law and the prophets the synagogue rulers sent to them, saying, Men, brothers, if there is among you a word of exhortation for the**

people, speak. And Paul having stood up, and having motioned with the hand, he said, Men! Israelites and those who fear God, listen" (Acts 13:15-16). What Paul would say in their synagogues often disturbed the tranquility of the assembly, but that did not make it wrong. Yet virtually all churches today condemn the kind of public discourse that Paul engaged in those synagogue meetings. Leaders of churches today fear challenges to their teachings, and insist on non-controversial services because they are spiritually weak. I have no doubt Paul would rebuke them.

Regarding gifts of the Holy Spirit, there are no longer any men who can do supernatural things like foretell the future, perform miracles, or speak in an unknown (to himself) tongue. Those gifts were given to Christians temporarily before the New Testament was written. Men who now claim to have them are either deluded or are liars. Prophets who were divinely inspired by God are a thing of the past. That is taught in this passage: **"God, who formerly spoke in many portions and in many ways to the fathers by the prophets, spoke to us in these last days by a Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, through whom also he made the ages"** (Hebrews 1:1-2).

The many portions and many ways God spoke to us was formerly. God spoke to us last by his Son Jesus Christ, who also used witnesses and spokesmen. It was through them that the New Testament was written. And now we have the complete word of God, which is sufficient for us, with no need for God to speak further **"in many portions and in many ways."** Therefore, prophets of God now are simply men who can expound and explain the word of God from the Holy Bible.

Regarding the holy kiss (or kiss of love as Peter spoke of it), I do not believe kissing itself was commanded. There are many ways we can greet each other with affection, but they should always be done decently and honorably; they should be "holy." Purity is part of holiness. And displays of affection, including kissing, should always be done with the utmost purity, with discretion and prudence. Nothing should ever be done which could, in any way, be interpreted by anyone as unseemly or too familiar. Therefore, whenever Christians greet each other with such things as a kiss or a hug, it should always be holy, meaning clean, honorable, and wholesome. The command about greeting each other with a holy kiss was not that we should always kiss each other, but that when we do, it should always be holy.

The assembly and the law of liberty

Those things not subject to expressed commands should come under the law of liberty. Christ's law of liberty gives Christians the right to use their own discretion about what they believe is most expedient for their church, and it includes things such as the following:

- When to meet.
- Where to meet.
- How often to meet.
- How long the meetings should last.

- How to teach, or sing, or pray.
- How many sing at any one time.
- How often to partake of the Lord's Supper.
- What kind of teaching aids to use.
- The kind of building in which to meet.
- Using prayer leaders and/or song leaders.
- What kind of other musical aids to use.
- How to otherwise conduct the service.
- Congregational property ownership.
- Financial support for worthy causes.

Regarding when to assemble as a congregation, there is no command to meet on a certain day. Assembling together on the first day of the week, as is the manner of most, is an ancient and honorable tradition, but it was never commanded. Regarding the Lord's supper, there is no command about how often to partake of it. Paul wrote much about the Lord's supper in his first letter to the Corinthians. And concerning when to partake of it, he said simply, **"For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes"** (First Corinthians 11:26).

Regarding music, the church assembly should never be a time for entertainment, which is what it has become in many modern churches. Continual vigilance is necessary to combat the human tendency to add to or modify the service in order to appeal to our fleshly pleasures. Paul rebuked the church at Corinth for making the Lord's supper into a feast for themselves (see First Corinthians 11:20-21). The purpose of song is for teaching and admonition, and the melody of a song is an aid to remembering its words. When Jehovah commanded Moses to write a song for the sons of Israel, he said, **"... this song shall testify before them as a witness, for it shall not be forgotten out of the mouths of their seed"** (Deuteronomy 31:21).

If instruments are used they should aid the purpose of singing, which is to teach and admonish. Musical instruments and melodies should never compete with the words being taught. Yet that is rarely done these days; the focus is on the music not the words. Paul spoke of such times, when he said, **"For there will be time when they will not tolerate sound doctrine, but they will accumulate teachers to themselves according to their own desires, who tickle the ear ..."** (Second Timothy 4:3). In like manner, the emphasis in music for churches today is on tickling the ear. There is nothing wrong with the music of songs in the assembly being pleasant, but the music should always be used to promote remembering the message of the words. What Paul taught about the Lord's supper is a good model for the song service. Keep it simple and serious to aid our memory. Avoid perverting it into a musical-banquet to tickle the ear.

Every part of the service should contribute to what the Lord wants done the way he wants it done. Not rigidly and mechanically, or for pleasure, but to fulfill the goals and purposes he has shown us in the examples and teachings of the New Testament. Our liberty should always be used to promote obedience to him and his righteousness.

Part 4:5

FORMER PEOPLE OF GOD

Adam was the first son of God created on the earth. He was called the son of God in the genealogy of Christ given in Luke (3:38). However, Adam sinned and was cast out of God's presence in the garden paradise of Eden. God also cursed the earth because of Adam's sin. The Bible speaks of other sons of God living in the antediluvian world. I speak much more about those things in my book *Becoming Sons of God for Eternity*.

After the creation, with the passage of time, mankind multiplied and became progressively more sinful. For the record says, **"And Jehovah saw that the wickedness of man was great on the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually"** (Genesis 6:5). Therefore, God destroyed them with a great flood, all but the righteous man Noah and his family.

ABRAHAM, ISAAC, AND JACOB

Some years after the flood God began to create a nation on earth for himself, one that would be separate from the world and would preserve righteousness. For he knew the world would become wicked again. And so about four thousand years ago he called a man named Abram (later named Abraham) to begin that nation. After Abram proved his faithfulness, by going where God told him, God said to him, **"For all the land which thou see, to thee I will give it, and to thy seed forever"** (Genesis 13:15). Later he also said to him, **"As for me, behold, my covenant is with thee, and thou shall be the father of a multitude of nations. Neither shall thy name any more be called Abram, but thy name shall be Abraham, for I have made thee the father of a multitude of nations. And I will make thee exceedingly fruitful. And I will make nations of thee, and kings shall come out of thee. And I will establish my covenant between me and thee and thy seed after thee throughout their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be a God to thee and to thy seed after thee"** (Genesis 17:4-7).

That God wanted Abraham to preserve righteousness is shown in these words of Jehovah about him: **"For I have known him, to the end that he may command his children and his household after him, that they may keep the way of Jehovah, to do righteousness and justice, to the end that Jehovah may bring upon Abraham that which he has spoken of him"** (Genesis 18:19).

Isaac was Abraham's son of the promise, and Isaac begot Jacob. Those three men were the founding fathers of the Hebrews. Nevertheless, we know from the Bible that neither Abraham, Isaac, nor Jacob (later named Israel) actually possessed the land God promised. It was several hundred years after God's promise to Abraham that their descendants took possession of the land.

The Sons of Israel

The sons of Israel soon multiplied greatly, but they were made slaves in the powerful land of Egypt where they had settled. Then, through many great signs and wonders, the mighty hand of God defeated the power of Egypt, freed his people from slavery, and led them out into the wilderness. There at the great mountain called Horeb and Sinai God gave his people a covenant. He said to them through Moses, **"Ye have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles' wings, and brought you to myself. Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be my own possession from among all peoples, for all the earth is mine, and ye shall be to me a kingdom of priests, and a holy nation"** (Exodus 19:4-6).

After that God gave them the ten commandments. When God gave them that law he spoke to the people directly from the mountain. However, they became so terrified at the sound of his voice and the demonstration of his power on the mountain that they pleaded with Moses, saying, **"Speak thou with us, and we will hear, but let not God speak with us, lest we die"** (Exodus 20:19). God later gave Moses many other laws for them. With that legal system and their promised land, God created for them an earthly theocracy.

A New Prophet Like Moses

When God first gave the law of Moses to his people Israel it was the best legal system the world had ever seen. However, the law of Moses was designed to last only until the coming of his only begotten Son, Jesus Christ. Moses first said to the people, **"Whatever thing I command you, that shall ye observe to do. Thou shall not add to it, nor diminish from it"** (Deuteronomy 12:32). After that, however, he told them God said he was going to send a new lawgiver. Jehovah said to Moses, **"I will raise up a prophet for them from among their brothers, like thee. And I will put my words in his mouth, and he shall speak to them all that I shall command him. And it shall come to pass, that whoever will not hearken to my words which he shall speak in my name, I will require it of him"** (Deuteronomy 18:18-19).

They were not to add to nor diminish from the laws Moses gave them. However, when God sent that new lawgiver they were to hearken to all his words. Jesus was that prophet, and what he spoke to the people was the new covenant called the Good News. Jeremiah prophesied about that new covenant when he said, **"Behold, the days come, says Jehovah, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah, not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt ..."** (Jeremiah 31:31-32).

That new covenant is about greater laws for a new and eternal nation of God's people—a spiritual theocracy known as the kingdom of God or the kingdom of the heavens. (The Old Testament prophet Daniel wrote a little about that; see Daniel 7:27). That kingdom consists of both Jews and Gentiles, those who are offspring of the faith of Abraham. For Paul said: **"There is no Jew nor Greek** [meaning Gentile]**, there is no bondman nor freeman, there is no male and female, for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. And if ye are Christ's,**

then ye are Abraham's seed and heirs according to promise" (Galatians 3:28-29). The people of God on earth are now an international brotherhood of men who have faith in his Son Jesus Christ, not members of one race.

The End of the Old Covenant

As part of the covenant of the law, God had promised a long list of blessings they would enjoy if they were obedient. However, if they were disobedient they would receive an even longer list of curses. They did enjoy many blessings for a time, but their continual disobedience to the law brought the curses and their eventual destruction.

In spite of its greatness the law of Moses could not keep them obedient. Actually, God knew at the beginning his people would not be faithful to his law. For he said to Moses just before he died, **"Behold, thou shall sleep with thy fathers. And this people will rise up, and play the harlot after the strange gods of the land where they go to be among them, and will forsake me, and break my covenant which I have made with them. Then my anger shall be kindled against them in that day, and I will forsake them, and I will hide my face from them, and they shall be devoured, and many evils and troubles shall come upon them, so that they will say in that day, Have not these evils come upon us because our God is not among us? And I will surely hide my face in that day for all the evil which they shall have wrought, in that they have turned to other gods. ... For I know their imagination which they frame this day, before I have brought them into the land which I swore"** (Deuteronomy 31:16-21).

A few centuries after they had settled in their promised land, because of the sins of the people and those of king Solomon, God divided their nation into northern and southern kingdoms. Those two kingdoms were called Israel and Judah, and they often quarreled. Eventually, God allowed both of those kingdoms to be destroyed because of their extreme sinfulness. Israel was conquered by the Assyrians, and about a century later Judah was conquered by the Chaldeans and Babylonians. The people of Israel and Judah were both driven from their lands and were scattered abroad.

Thus they were prevented from keeping all the laws of Moses, even if they wanted to. However, the Jews were able to resurrect that legal system in Judah after a remnant returned from their Babylonian captivity. They were able to revive it because they returned to their land, at least part of it, and they still had their genealogical records of the Levites, the priestly class. You can read about those things in the books of Ezra and Nehemiah.

When Jesus came he brought God's promised new covenant, but the Jews as a whole rejected it. There was, therefore, a period of time when Jewish disciples of Christ obeyed both the new covenant of Christ and the old covenant of the law of Moses. Jews in Israel who became disciples of Jesus were obligated to obey the law of Moses because it was the law of the land. However, that did not last long, for the old covenant was passing away.

The book of Hebrews in the New Testament was written after the establishment of the church, and it tells how the old covenant was passing away. Commenting about the prophecy of Jeremiah the author said, **"In saying, New, he has made the first old. And what is**

becoming old and obsolete is near disappearance" (Hebrews 8:13). Notice he said the old covenant was **"becoming old and obsolete"** and **"is near disappearance."** At the beginning all Christians were Jews. And those who were citizens of Israel were still committed to the law of Moses because it was the law of the land. However, God's covenant with that law was **"old and obsolete is near disappearance."**

It finally ended forty years after Christ began his ministry. It ended with the complete destruction of Israel and the dispersion of the people by the Romans. They were destroyed because they rejected their redeemer, who even lived as a man among them. Isaiah prophesied about that, when he said, **"In all their affliction he was afflicted, and the agent of his presence saved them. In his love and in his pity he redeemed them. And he bore them, and carried them all the days of old. But they rebelled, and grieved his holy Spirit. Therefore he was turned to be their enemy, *and* himself fought against them"** (Isaiah 63:9-10). And now God has made it impossible for them to ever resurrect the law of Moses. The theocracy of Israel based upon the law of Moses is forever lost. Hopes of resurrecting that ancient theocracy are as futile as seeking to resurrect the body of Moses himself. And those who pursue such vanity are only increasing the hatred, the division, and the sorrow of that now unholy land. All such efforts are doomed to fail because God is against them.

The Jews After Christ

Judaism

From the beginning most Jews have rejected Christ, and clung to the law of Moses. However, their dispersion by the Romans made it impossible for them to continue with that law. Therefore, they created a hybrid religion called Judaism. What they have done is to pick and choose those few of Moses' laws they can and want to obey, and then heaped upon them a host of other traditions they have invented through the centuries after Moses.

They have also created for themselves many laws beyond those recorded in the Bible. They call them "the oral law," claiming they were given by God but simply not written in the Torah (the first five books of the Bible). Here is a description (given in the internet encyclopedia Wikipedia) of what they call the oral law:

> According to classical Judaism, the books of the Tanakh (Hebrew Bible) were transited in parallel with an oral tradition, as relayed by the scholarly and other religious leaders of each generation. The "written law" (*Torah she-bi-khtav* ...) comprises the Torah and the rest of the Tanakh; the "Oral Law" (*Torah she-be'al peh* ...) was ultimately recorded in the Talmud and Midrash.

However, nothing in the Bible even implies the existence of such oral laws from God. And the Bible alone contains his inspired word. Those who rely upon other sources for knowledge of God's commands do so at their peril. Countless numbers of souls have been led astray by the many claims made for other sources.

Ironically, in the justice of God, this hodgepodge of dead laws they have accumulated over the centuries, which is called Judaism, has become a Frankenstein monster to them.

It has grown to be a tormenting yoke about their necks, a jungle thicket of statutes and ordinances, a labyrinth of senseless trivia which does not help promote righteousness, but impedes it. The fact is the great majority of Jews ignore most of them, which has had the effect of undermining respect for most of the authentic commands of God.

Below is a sample of what they call the oral law, which I copied from a book by Jacob Neusner. This sample is only one tiny part of Judaic law in the Mishnah (which is the first part of the Talmud), in this case from the division on agriculture, the demai section (the insertions and italics are not mine).

1:1

A. The light things with respect to [the category of] *demai* produce [those kinds of produce which are dealt with leniently and exempted from tithing when they are *demai*]:

B. (1) unripe figs, and (2) wild jujuba, and (3) hawthorn berries, and (4) pine cones, and (5) sycamore figs, and (6) unripe dates, and (7) fennel, and (8) caper fruit;

C. and in Judea: (1) sumac berries, and (2) vinegar and (3) coriander.

D. R. Judah says, "(1) All unripe figs are exempt [from tithing as *demai*] except for those from trees which bear fruit twice a year;

E. "(2) All wild jujuba are exempt [from tithing as *demai*] except for the wild jujuba of ... ;

F. "(3) All sycamore figs are exempt [from tithing as *demai*] except for those which burst open [on the tree] [or, 'which are scarified']."

1:2

A. [Second tithe of] *demai* produce:

B. (1) has no added fifth, and (2) has no removal [viz., it is not subject to these scriptural obligations],

C. (3) and it is eaten by a mourner before the burial of his dead relative ...[1]

And on and on it goes. The religious legal system they have created is actually a fulfillment of prophesy. Consider for example these words of Isaiah: **"No, but by *men of* strange lips and with another tongue he will speak to this people, to whom he said, This is the rest. Give ye rest to him who is weary. And this is the refreshing. Yet they would not hear. Therefore the word of Jehovah shall be to them precept upon precept, precept upon precept, line upon line, line upon line, here a little, there a little, that they may go, and fall backward, and be broken, and snared, and taken. There-**

1. Jacob Neusner: *The Mishnah A New Translation*, (New Haven & London: Yale University Press) 1988.

fore hear the word of Jehovah, ye scoffers, who rule this people that is in Jerusalem" (Isaiah 28:11-14).

I will explain how those words apply to the Jews who reject Christ. It was on the day of Pentecost after Jesus' resurrection that the Spirit of God spoke to the Jews **"by *men of* strange lips and with another tongue**." For Luke said of that occasion, **"And while fulfilling the day of Pentecost, they were all together at the same place. And suddenly there developed a sound from the sky as of a forceful wind moving, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. And there appeared to them dividing tongues, as of fire, and they settled upon each one of them. And they were all filled of the Holy Spirit, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them to declare"** (Acts 2:1-4). Those men who spoke that way were the apostles of Jesus. And what they said was God's offer to give the people this **"rest to him who is weary,"** which is the good news of salvation through Jesus Christ, and freedom from the yoke of the law.

Yet the Jewish nation as a whole **"would not hear."** Therefore the word of Jehovah is to them **"precept upon precept ..."** which is impossible to fully keep, making them guilty. Therefore, God will judge them by their own legal monstrosity which causes them to **"fall backward, and be broken, and snared, and taken,"** because it is impossible not to violate it. Consequently their souls are condemned. Scoffing at the true word of God—the good news of Jesus Christ, brought to them by their own prophets—they have fallen under eternal condemnation.

A veil over them

Some modern Jews (like their Muslim enemies are for Allah) are full of zeal for God, just as they were during Paul's time when he said, **"For I testify to them that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge. For not understanding the righteousness of God, and seeking to establish their own righteousness, they did not submit to the righteousness of God. For Christ is the end of law for righteousness, to every man who believes"** (Romans 10:2-4).

However, their proud refusal to accept the Redeemer that God sent to them has hardened their hearts, keeping them blind, even as Paul said: **"Having therefore such a hope we use great boldness, and are not as Moses. He put a veil over his face in order for the sons of Israel not to gaze on the end of the fading. But their minds were hardened, for to this day the same veil remains at the reading of the old testament, not being uncovered, which thing is abolished in Christ. But to this day when Moses is read, a veil lays upon their heart. But whenever it turns to the Lord, the veil is removed. Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty"** (Second Corinthians 3:12-17).

If they are still God's chosen people, is he so weak that he cannot care for them? Where was God during the Nazi holocaust, if indeed, they were his chosen ones? Can he not even bring peace and security to those he is supposed to love the most? Christians know why they are persecuted, but why have the Jews suffered so much? It is not because they can

no longer keep Moses' law. It is because they have rejected Moses' replacement. For remember God's warning to them by the mouth of Moses himself: **"I will raise up a prophet for them from among their brothers, like thee. And I will put my words in his mouth, and he shall speak to them all that I shall command him. And it shall come to pass, that whoever will not hearken to my words which he shall speak in my name, I will require it of him"** (Deuteronomy 18:18-19). It was Jews like Peter who proclaimed the truth to their fellow Jews when he said, **"And salvation is not in any other man, for there is no other name under the heaven, that has been given among men, by which we must be saved"** (Acts 4:12).

Hope for them

Yet there is still hope for the Jews, because Paul told the Gentiles in Rome, **"For I do not want you, brothers, to be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise according to yourselves, that a callousness in part has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles come in. And so all Israel will be saved, as it is written, The man who delivers will come from Zion, and will turn away impiety from Jacob. And this is the covenant from me to them when I will take away their sins. They are indeed enemies toward the good news for your sake, but toward selection, they are beloved for the fathers' sake. For the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable. For as ye once were also disobedient to God, but now have received mercy at the disobedience of these ..."** Romans 11:25-30).

And so we must continue to pray for them, and to reach out to them with the good news of Christ, hoping they will soften their hearts soon, so that they will believe in their Messiah, Jesus Christ, and the veil over their eyes can be removed, and **"all Israel will be saved."** Then God will open the windows of heaven, and pour out a blessing upon us all. Paul was both a Jew and an apostle of Christ, and he spoke of how God chose the Gentiles after his Son was rejected by the Jews: **"For I speak to you the Gentiles. Inasmuch as I am indeed an apostle of Gentiles, I enhance my ministry, if somehow I may provoke my flesh to jealousy and may save some of them. For if the casting away of them is reconciliation of the world, what is the acceptance except life from the dead?"** (Romans 11:13-15).

The acceptance of the Jews will be like this great vision of Ezekiel: **"The hand of Jehovah was upon me, and he brought me out in the Spirit of Jehovah, and set me down in the midst of the valley, and it was full of bones. And he caused me to pass by them round about. And, behold, there were very many in the open valley, and, lo, they were very dry. And he said to me, Son of man, can these bones live? And I answered, O lord Jehovah, thou know.**

"Again he said to me, Prophesy over these bones, and say to them, O ye dry bones, hear the word of Jehovah. Thus says the lord Jehovah to these bones: Behold, I will cause breath to enter into you, and ye shall live. And I will lay sinews upon you, and will bring up flesh upon you, and cover you with skin, and put breath in you, and ye shall live. And ye shall know that I am Jehovah. So I prophesied as I was com-

manded. And as I prophesied, there was a noise, and, behold, an earthquake, and the bones came together, bone to its bone. And I beheld, and, lo, there were sinews upon them, and flesh came up, and skin covered them above, but there was no breath in them.

"Then he said to me, Prophesy to the wind. Prophesy, son of man, and say to the wind, Thus says the lord Jehovah: Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live. So I prophesied as he commanded me, and the breath came into them, and they lived, and stood up upon their feet, an exceedingly great army.

"Then he said to me, Son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel. Behold, they say, Our bones are dried up, and our hope is lost. We are clean cut off. Therefore prophesy, and say to them, Thus says the lord Jehovah: Behold, I will open your graves, and cause you to come up out of your graves, O my people, and I will bring you into the land of Israel. And ye shall know that I am Jehovah when I have opened your graves, and caused you to come up out of your graves, O my people. And I will put my Spirit in you, and ye shall live. And I will place you in your own land. And ye shall know that I, Jehovah, have spoken it and performed it, says Jehovah" (Ezekiel 37:1-14).

Their dry bones will live when they humble themselves, repent of their sins, believe in Jesus Christ, and obey him, as we Gentiles have. And when that happens we will all rejoice exceedingly. For Jesus said, **"Thus I say to you, there becomes joy in the presence of the agents of God over one sinner who repents"** (Luke 15:10). Since there is rejoicing over one sinner who repents, think of the rejoicing when the former people of God repent. Will not God respond with great blessings for us all? Remember what Paul said about them: **"For if the casting away of them is reconciliation of the world, what is the acceptance except life from the dead?"**

Part 4:6

GOD'S LAW FOR NATIONS

God created the world and all things in it, and he knows how best it should function. In what we call the Lord's prayer, Jesus said, **"May thy will happen on the earth as also in heaven"** (Matthew 6:10). God wants all men to obey his will, and that includes all groups of men. It is therefore God's will that all nations obey him and his righteousness, as well as all individuals. For the most important quality of any nation is righteousness, as Solomon said: **"Righteousness exalts a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people"** (Proverbs 14:34).

Study any nation, and you will see how its peace and prosperity are highly correlated with the righteousness of its people. To the extent that the citizens of a nation and its authorities encourage righteousness and punish sin, to that extent it is going to going to be exalted. And to the extent that the citizens of a nation and its authorities discourage righteousness and tolerate sin, to that extent it is going to be reproached. It is to the advantage of every man and of every nation to obey the will of God. The truth of that lesson is demonstrated every day throughout the world, but the devil has blinded mankind to it.

THE RULER OF THIS WORLD

The most important part of obedience to the will of God is subjection to his Son, Jesus Christ. Indeed, the Bible teaches that all men are subject to him, for it says he is **"Lord of lords and King of kings"** (Revelation 17:14). The book of Hebrews tells how God exalted Christ over all things including man. Among those words it says, **"Thou subordinated all things under his feet. For in subordinating all things to him, he left nothing not subordinate to him. But now we do not yet see all things subordinated to him"** (Hebrews 2:8). God subordinated all things under the feet of Jesus.

However, as that passage says, all things are not yet subordinated to him. They are not, because this is a sinful world in rebellion against God. Hence, God's great adversary the devil is now ruler of the world instead of Jesus. Our Lord himself confessed that fact. For example, during the last supper with his apostles Jesus spoke a prayer. Among the things he said in that prayer was, **"Now is the judgment of this world. Now the ruler of this world will be cast out"** (John 12:31). God's great adversary the devil is the ruler of this world, and he was cast out of heaven to the earth after Jesus' crucifixion.

When Jesus was in the wilderness being tempted by the devil, the Bible says, **"... the devil showed him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time. And the devil said to him, I will give to thee all this authority, and the glory of them, because it has been delivered to me, and to whomever I want I give it"** (Luke 4:5-6). All the kingdoms of the world have been delivered to the devil, not by God but by men themselves, because God gave the world to man. For the psalmist said, **"The heavens are the heavens of Jehovah, but the earth he has given to the sons of men"** (Psalm 115:16).

The great majority of men prefer the devil's ways to those of Jehovah. Therefore, the spirit of the devil rules in their hearts. Paul spoke of that when he wrote to his brothers in Ephesus: **"Even you, who were dead in trespasses and sins in which ye once walked according to the era of this world, according to the ruler of the power of the air, the spirit that now works in the sons of disobedience. Among whom we also all once behaved in the lusts of our flesh, doing the intentions of the flesh and of the thoughts, and were by nature children of wrath as also the others"** (Ephesians 2:1-3).

Jesus also told why the world submits to the devil and not to God when he was debating with the Pharisees. He said, **"Why do ye not understand my speech? Because ye cannot hear my word"** (John 8:43). They could not understand him because they could not hear his word. They heard what he was saying, but they could not bear to accept it. What he taught was too alien and offensive to their thinking. Jesus went on to tell them, **"Ye are from the father, the devil, and ye want to do the desires of your father. He was a man-killer from the beginning, and he has not stood in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own, because he is a liar, and the father of it. And I, because I speak the truth, ye do not believe me"** (John 8:44-45). Sinners are subject to the devil because they want to do his will. They want to do his will because they love his ways. For example, like the devil they hate the truth and they love to lie. Therefore, deceit is as widespread in the world as clouds are in the sky.

Rule by Darkness

Paul said that we the disciples of Christ should give thanks to God because he **"rescued us out of the power of darkness, and transferred us into the kingdom of the Son of his love, in whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, who is an image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation"** (Colossians 1:13-15). This is a world in the power of darkness. When Jesus first appeared to Paul in his vision on the way to Damascus, Jesus said he was going to send him to the Gentiles **"to open their eyes to turn about from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to God, for them to receive remission of sins and a lot among those who have been sanctified by faith in me"** (Acts 26:18).

The world loves the devil more than God, because they love sin and darkness more than truth and righteousness. One reason is because their spiritual darkness deceives them. Sin is appealing because with their limited vision in the darkness all they can see is that sin is pleasurable. They also see that the more sin is skillfully performed, the more it seems to be profitable and rewarding in many ways. That is especially the case when a man's conscience is corrupted or seared, so that he has no guilt feelings when he sins. And in their darkness they cannot see far enough ahead to see the evil consequences.

When vision is limited sin seems alluring, but in fact it is deadly. As Paul said, **"For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord"** (Romans 6:23). If men believed that, they would not sin, because men do not ordinarily do things deliberately to cause their deaths.

The Bible says that men are led astray by the devil: **"And the great dragon was cast out, the ancient serpent, called the Devil and Satan, he who leads the whole world astray. He was cast out to the earth, and his agents were cast out with him"** (Revelation 12:9). The devil is a tyrant, and every tyrant rules by the darkness of deceit. That is how tyrants keep their subjects in bondage to them. Most of the people in Nazi Germany were intensely loyal to Hitler. They were loyal to him because he and his henchmen kept them deceived. Most of the people in the Soviet Union were intensely loyal to Stalin. They were loyal to him because he and his henchmen kept them deceived. Most of the people of North Korea are intensely loyal to their ruler. They are loyal to him because he and his henchmen keep them deceived.

Thus, one way the devil is able to lead men astray is when sinners gain power, and sinners gain power when men love to sin. And the more sinners gain power, the more men will be led astray. For Paul told Timothy, **"But evil men and impostors will go forward to worse, leading astray and being led astray"** (Second Timothy 3:13). It is a vicious cycle of sin and deceit, **"leading astray and being led astray."** Men love to sin because they are deceived, and they are deceived because they love to sin. Indeed, it is astonishing but true that many even love to be deceived, just as they love to stupefy their minds in drunkenness. It all seems so irrational, but that is the reality of this sinful world.

Jesus taught about that, when he said of himself, **"... the light has come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the light, for their deeds were evil. For every man who does evil hates the light, and does not come to the light, so that his works may not be exposed. But he who does the truth comes to the light, so that his deeds may be made manifest that they are wrought in God"** (John 3:17-21).

The Wrath of God

As long as most men in the world continue to rebel and war against God and his righteousness he is going to continue to afflict them. The book of Revelation describes how God sends plagues against the world because men refuse to repent. It says, for example, **"And I heard a great voice out of the temple, saying to the seven agents, Go ye and pour out the seven bowls of the wrath of God into the earth. And the first went and poured out his bowl into the earth, and a bad and evil sore developed upon the men who have the mark of the beast and who worship its image. And the second agent poured out his bowl into the sea, and it became blood like of a dead man, and every living soul in the sea died. And the third agent poured out his bowl into the rivers and into the springs of the waters, and they became blood.**

"And I heard the agent of the waters saying, Thou are righteous who is and was—the Divine—because thou judged these things. Because they poured out the blood of the sanctified and prophets, and thou have given them blood to drink; they are deserving. And I heard the altar saying, Yea, Lord God Almighty, true and righteous are thy judgments.

"And the fourth agent poured out his bowl upon the sun, and it was given him to scorch men with fire. And the men were scorched with great heat. And the men blasphemed the name of God who has power over these plagues, and they did not repent to give him glory. And the fifth agent poured out his bowl upon the throne of the beast, and its kingdom became darkened, and they gnawed their tongues from the anguish. And they blasphemed the God of heaven from their pains and from their sores. And they did not repent of their works" (Revelation 16:1-11).

There is much symbolic meaning in those words, which makes them difficult to interpret in detail. Nevertheless, the lesson they teach is that God's wrath is the cause of plagues upon this sinful world. Therefore, be not deceived. Men cannot expect to rebel and war against God and his righteousness, and think he will not retaliate. He is very patient and longsuffering, but he will unleash his wrath eventually. And there is no power in heaven or on the earth that can defend against it.

When men continue to rebel and war against him, men are going to suffer plagues. That is what God has told to us in his holy book. As Jesus said, **"For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, and there will be famines and plagues and earthquakes in places. But all these things are the beginning of travail"** (Matthew 24:7-8). Those things are part of the travails of this world because men have rebelled against God, and have made his great adversary their ruler. Therefore, be not surprised when travails come. And blame not God for what men have provoked by their sinfulness. Suffer patiently as Christ suffered so that you will be glorified with him in the sinless world of heaven.

A Nation of God

Remember what Jehovah said to the sons of Israel through Moses when they arrived at Sinai: **"Ye have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles' wings, and brought you to myself. Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be my own possession from among all peoples, for all the earth is mine, and ye shall be to me a kingdom of priests, and a holy nation"** (Exodus 19:4-6).

God is impartial, not only to persons but also to nations. When Solomon said, **"Righteousness exalts a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people,"** he was not speaking only of Israel. Any nation that keeps God's righteousness faithfully will be exalted. And I am confident that any people who obeys his voice and keeps his covenant (the new covenant of Christ) he will make a holy nation. And they will enjoy the long list of blessings that God promised his people Israel if they kept his covenant with them.

Although Satan is the ruler of this world (because men have chosen him), nevertheless I have no doubt it is still possible to have an earthly nation where Jesus is recognized as king. When the time comes that disciples of Christ are able to create their own earthly nation, they can create a nation of God. Of course, for such a nation to exist it must be done God's way. That means its rulers and judges must be wise and faithful Christians who submit to the supreme lordship of Jesus.

Moreover, its laws for righteousness and justice must be based upon the principles of those taught in the word of God. For the Bible says, **"Man will not live on bread alone, but on every word coming out through the mouth of God"** (Deuteronomy 8:3 and Matthew 4:4). Without knowledge of the word of God mankind inevitably drifts into spiritual decadence and death. Remember the antediluvian world.

I was tempted to describe in this book what I thought would be the kind of government and specific laws a nation of God should have, beyond what I have already suggested. However, upon reflection I concluded it was not possible. For circumstances in different times and places, and among different peoples can vary so much that I do not believe there is any way to make specific recommendations that would be suitable for all nations.

Righteous men trained sufficiently in the word of God will be creative enough to determine what kind of government and specific laws are needed for their situation. For that reason I do not believe in constitutional government. Applications of the principles of the laws of God's righteousness must be free to vary according to circumstances. And changing circumstances are a natural and inevitable part of this world. Righteous men trained by the word of God will be wise enough to determine what is best for their conditions. Nevertheless, commitment to the lordship of Christ, and the principles of the laws of God must always prevail. How to apply those principles is what should be free to vary.

The forefathers of our American government had faith in God and were trained in the Bible. When the need arose they created a form of government that was superior to any of their time. Nevertheless, they were not sufficiently knowledgeable about the word of God, nor were they sufficiently committed to the lordship of Jesus Christ. Had they been, they would not have created a secular government, nor would they have created an enduring constitution that would compete with the Bible as a sacred document, which it has become.

They did know that the form of government and its specific laws are not the most important things about a nation. Top priority is always to have righteous citizens who are well trained in the word of God, and fully committed to the lordship of Jesus Christ. Creating a nation of God is impossible without righteous men. For no matter how wise and good a system may be, it will not promote truth and righteousness if it is operated by sinful men. Our national forefathers knew that, but they left the function of creating and maintaining righteous men to the churches. They wanted limited government, and apparently feared the development of a new catholic church like that of medieval Europe. Consequently, by making our government and its laws completely secular, they inadvertently made one that developed into an enemy of Christ. For Jesus said, **"He who is not with me is against me, and he who does not gather with me scatters"** (Luke 11:23). There can be no neutrality with him, whether by individual men or by governments.

Every aspect of a nation of God, including its government, its laws, and its leaders, must be used to defend and promote its knowledge of truth and righteousness, plus the strength and quality of its character, including commitment to Jesus Christ. For those things are its foundation.

Perhaps the most vital thing that must be developed and maintained is faith in God—the only true God of the Bible—and that includes love for him. And that is done by continual study of the Bible. When genuine trust in God is strong then the other things will follow. For that reason our great adversary the devil seeks to undermine our faith and trust in God, as he did at the beginning with Eve. It has been satanic things like the theory of evolution that caused modern men to doubt God, which has greatly increased their spiritual decadence.

Therefore, challenges to faith in God and his laws of righteousness can never be tolerated. Of course, debate about specific applications of his laws should be allowed, and at times even encouraged, because conditions change. And every generation must advance into parts unknown as it grows and develops. However, the principles of God's laws for righteousness never change. Need for them is as enduring as our need for nourishment and shelter. And any nation that neglects those things will suffer. That cannot be emphasized too much, because **"Righteousness exalts a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people"** (Proverbs 14:34). The histories of all the nations of the world show the inevitability of those consequences.

Freedom and Tolerance

One final word about freedom and tolerance. There are two things that cannot be challenged in a nation of God. One is the lordship of Jesus Christ, and the other is obedience to the laws of God's righteousness as taught in the Holy Bible. The genuine good news of Christ, based upon the teachings of the Bible, must be the foundation of any nation of God. Other things can vary, including its government, but the genuine good news of Christ, as revealed and taught in the New Testament, must remain its foundation.

Therefore, there can be no tolerance in a nation of God for the practice or promotion of anything that challenges or competes with the truth and righteousness that is taught in the Holy Bible. That includes the teachings of men who claim to be prophets, or who claim to speak with divine authority. It also includes any ideas that contradict what is taught there. Such challenges are an attack against the truth of the word of God, and they will be like termites in a house of wood. They will contribute nothing constructive, but will slowly eat away at its foundation and superstructure until the whole thing collapses.

God wanted no tolerance for such things in the land of his chosen people. For example, many times Jehovah warned the sons of Israel against having any other gods in their land. Here is one: **"Take heed to thyself, lest thou make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land where thou go, lest it be for a snare in the midst of thee. But ye shall break down their altars, and dash in pieces their pillars, and ye shall cut down their Asherim, for thou shall worship no other god. For Jehovah, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God. Lest thou make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land, and they play the harlot after their gods, and sacrifice to their gods, and *a man* calls thee and thou eat of his sacrifice, and thou take of their daughters to thy sons, and their daughters**

play the harlot after their gods, and make thy sons play the harlot after their gods" (Exodus 34:12-16).

Neither were they to listen to false prophets. He said to them, **"If there arise in the midst of thee a prophet, or a dreamer of dreams, and he gives thee a sign or a wonder, and the sign or the wonder comes to pass, of which he spoke to thee, saying, Let us go after other gods, which thou have not known, and let us serve them, thou shall not hearken to the words of that prophet, or to that dreamer of dreams, for Jehovah your God proves you, to know whether ye love Jehovah your God with all your heart and with all your soul.**

"Ye shall walk after Jehovah your God, and fear him, and keep his commandments, and obey his voice, and ye shall serve him, and cling to him. And that prophet, or that dreamer of dreams, shall be put to death, because he has spoken rebellion against Jehovah your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, and redeemed thee out of the house of bondage, to draw thee aside out of the way which Jehovah thy God commanded thee to walk in. So shall thou put away the evil from the midst of thee" (Deuteronomy 13:1-5).

Jehovah did not want anything that threatened faith in him and his righteousness to be allowed in his nation Israel, and no other nation can allow them if they want to become and remain a genuine nation of God.

Regarding differences in Christian beliefs and practices, Jesus wanted his disciples to be united, but there will probably always be some division while we are in this world. Paul spoke of that, when he said to the Corinthians, **"I hear divisions are present among you, and I partly believe it. For there must also be factions among you, so that the genuine may become apparent among you"** (First Corinthians 11:18-19). Certainly, continuing efforts should be made to increase our Christian unity. That should be a major goal of all disciples of Christ. However, it should be done by teaching and persuasion.

Therefore, within Christian faith the state should allow some freedom and tolerance, including the allowance of different church practices. Different beliefs and practices about details of Christian living should be judged by each man from what the Bible teaches, not what authorities command. And errors should be corrected with **"the sword of the Spirit,"** and not with the sword of the state. Freedom to use the word of God to promote righteousness and oppose error should never be taken away.

That freedom is often taken away from Christians, even including Americans now in spite of all our legal rights. Our sinful rulers and judges are now condemning and suppressing some of what the Bible teaches as "offensive" and "hateful." Such is what happens when a people become corrupted spiritually. That is why preserving the Christian character of its people must be the most important priority of any nation of God. It can only survive by being a nation of righteous men who have faith in Christ.

Part 4:7

FINAL COMMENTS

THE HOLY BIBLE

The only reliable source of knowledge about God and his will for us is the Holy Bible. It is the only book from heaven, and it was written by divine inspiration. Put your trust in the Holy Bible, because it is through its words that God speaks to us. Men who claim that God speaks to them directly are liars. For the author of Hebrews said, **"God, who formerly spoke in many portions and in many ways to the fathers by the prophets, spoke to us in these last days by a Son ..."** (Hebrews 1:1). The words of Christ and his representatives that are recorded in the New Testament are the last things that God has spoken to us. He no longer speaks to men directly "**in many portions and in many ways,"** like a dream, or a vision, or an inner voice. Every man who claims God speaks to him directly, independently of the Bible is a liar. It is only from his written word that we can learn what is the will of God and how to apply it to our lives.

Scoffers continually attack the Bible, but trust your soul with what it teaches because it will never fail you. Never trust any man with your soul instead, no matter how persuasive and self-confident he may be. And let not men mislead you when they ignore and reject passages that disagree with what they say. Keep your mind open to all that the Bible teaches. False teachers select only scriptures that seem to justify what they teach, but every man will be judged by all that God says to us and not what anyone else says. Beware of false teachers. There are many of them in the world, some of whom are very popular. I have even heard men teach lessons that warned about false teachers, who themselves were false teachers. Which were hypocrites and which were deluded I know not. But hearken to this warning in the Bible: **"There is a way which seems right to a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death"** (Proverbs 14:12). Never trust your life with what *seems* right to you. Verify! That is especially true about what God requires of us. Your eternal soul is at stake.

And set not your hope on this life, for the more your eyes are opened to the truth, the more you are going to become disappointed about this world and the men in it. As the wise man Solomon said, **"For in much wisdom is much grief, and he who increases knowledge increases sorrow"** (Ecclesiastes 1:18). Yet wisdom and knowledge are well worth it, because you will be able to serve the Lord better, and your service for him will be rewarded beyond measure, far beyond what any of us can even conceive. Set your hope on the afterlife. Trust God and obey his laws of righteousness as taught in his holy word, because he will never forsake you or fail you.

FROM THE PSALMS

Here are some words of encouragement from the Psalms about the law of God:

> **Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked, nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of scoffers, but his delight is in the law of Jeho-**

> **vah, and on his law he meditates day and night. And he shall be like a tree planted by the streams of water, that brings forth its fruit in its season, whose leaf also does not wither. And whatever he does shall prosper** (1:1-3).
>
> **The law of Jehovah is perfect, restoring the soul. The testimony of Jehovah is sure, making a simple man wise. The precepts of Jehovah are right, rejoicing the heart. The commandment of Jehovah is pure, enlightening the eyes. The fear of Jehovah is clean, enduring forever. The ordinances of Jehovah are true, *and* righteous altogether. More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold. Sweeter also than honey and the droppings of the honeycomb. Moreover by them thy servant is warned. In keeping them there is great reward** (19:7-11).
>
> **I have been young, and now am old, yet I have not seen a righteous man forsaken, nor his seed begging bread. All the day long he deals graciously, and lends, and his seed is blessed. Depart from evil, and do good, and dwell for evermore. For Jehovah loves justice, and forsakes not his sanctified. They are preserved forever, but the seed of the wicked shall be cut off. The righteous shall inherit the land, and dwell in it forever The mouth of a righteous man talks of wisdom, and his tongue speaks justice. The law of his God is in his heart. None of his steps shall slide** (37:25-31).

Psalm 119 is the longest psalm in the Bible. It contains more than 42,000 words, most of which are expressions of praise for the law of God. Indeed, the word law is used in that psalm more than twice as many times as in all the other psalms combined.

Love and the Commandments

When asked what was the great commandment in the law, Jesus said, **"Thou shall love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart, and with thy whole soul, and with thy whole mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like it, Thou shall love thy neighbor as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets"** (Matthew 22:37-40). Those two commandments express the essence of what the law commanded. Nevertheless, the essence is never the whole. And Jesus was careful to obey all that the law commanded.

Part of our love for God is keeping his commandments. During the last supper Jesus told his apostles, **"If ye love me, keep my commandments"** (John 14:15). Then a few words later, he said, **"If ye keep my commandments, ye will dwell in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments, and dwell in his love"** (John 15:10). The only way for any man to dwell in the love of God is to keep his commandments, the laws of his righteousness which are now a part of the good news of Christ.

May we all seek to dwell in the love of God. For Jesus said to his apostles, **"In my Father's house are many dwellings, and if not, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I come again, and will take you along to myself, so that where I am, ye may be also"** (John 14:2-3). That promise was meant for all of his disciples, and it is the great hope of all who keep his commandments.

“Now to the King of the ages, immortal, invisible, alone wise, to God is honor and glory into the ages of the ages. Truly.”

— First Timothy 1:17

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